

# Tuition and Exam Fees and Appeals Policy

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## 1 Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to define the basis on which learners will be charged for their tuition and examinations and to detail the procedure for the appeal.

## 2 Scope

This policy and procedure applies to all learners enrolled on courses provided by Warrington & Vale Royal College with the exception of learners enrolled on Higher Education (HE) courses. Refer to the *HE Tuition Fee, Break in Learning and Refunds Policy* for information relating to HE provision.

## 3 Responsibility

Overall responsibility for the implementation of this procedure lies with the Deputy Principal, Finance and Resources, supported by the Director of MIS.

## 4 Procedure

### 4.1 General Principles

- 4.1.1 For eligible learners, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) will make a contribution towards the cost of a Learner's programme. In some cases, full funding is available and no fees are payable by employers or individuals. In other cases, employers and individuals are expected to contribute to the cost of learning – this is referred to as co-funded. The College will charge learners eligible for co-funding a minimum of 50% of the fully funded rate for any learning aim funded by the ESFA.
- 4.1.2 Curriculum Directors (CDs) are responsible for agreeing fees for ESFA provision in their areas of the curriculum. CDs wishing to charge fees below the assumed fee income (AFI) for any of their courses must obtain the prior approval of the appropriate ELT member. Fees below the AFI may be charged to ensure tuition costs are comparable to those of local competitors. Any fees charged above the AFI must be justified by market conditions and will be approved by the Director of MIS.
- 4.1.3 Full cost (self-financing) provision which cannot be funded by the ESFA will be calculated on the basis of the costs of delivery plus overheads in accordance with the full cost template.
- 4.1.4 Full-time FE students wishing to take additional part-time courses will be charged the fees quoted in the prospectus.
- 4.1.5 Unless otherwise stated, tuition fees relate to a single academic year only. Learners undertaking courses of more than one year duration will be required to pay further fees at the start of each academic year. Tuition fees for further years will not normally increase by more than 5% of the previous year's fee.
- 4.1.6 Eligibility for funding, fees and loans may vary between years depending on a learner's age and personal circumstances. Learners will be advised of the

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current position at the time of enrolment. Learners who are eligible for fee remission/funding in the first year of their course may not be eligible for fee remission/funding in subsequent years.

4.1.7 A refund or waiver of remaining instalment payments will be applicable in the following circumstances:

- The course is cancelled by the college.
- The course day or time is changed which prevents the learner's attendance.
- The learner has paid a fee but is entitled to remission.
- The learner withdraws prior to 5 working days of the course start date.
- Where a learner transfers from one course to another, the difference in course fees will be refunded/waivered where applicable. The learner will pay the difference should there be a higher fee.
- Where a formal complaint has been upheld in relation to the quality of the course.

4.1.8 An administration fee of £30 will be deducted from all refunds where the learner has requested withdrawal, unless a complaint, made through the official complaints procedure, has been upheld. Where fees are £30 or less no refund will be due.

4.1.9 Refunds will be processed within 14 working days of receipt of the payment voucher by the Finance department.

4.1.10 Exceptional circumstances:

- Refunds/ fee waivers outside of the above criteria will only be made at the discretion of the Director of Finance and IT and this will only be under exceptional circumstances. Requests outside of the above criteria must be submitted to the Finance department via an official Refund/Fee Waiver Request form.
- The college cannot accept responsibility for changes in learner circumstances brought about by employers, illness etc. Any claims for refunds/fee waivers in these cases will be individually assessed by the Assistant Principal for Quality & MIS whose decision is final.

## 4.2 Definition of Learner Age

4.2.1 For learners (excluding apprentices) aged 16-18, a learner's age will be their age on 31st August in the year they start their programme of study.

4.2.2 For Apprenticeships (all ages) and classroom based provision for learners aged 19+, a learner's age will be taken as their age on the day their provision starts.

## 4.3 Young People aged 16-18

- 4.3.1 In accordance with ESFA regulations no compulsory enrolment, admin, registration, assessment, exam fee or Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check will be charged to learners aged 18 years of age or under.
- 4.3.2 Learners who have turned 19 but started a 2 year study programme when they were 18 still qualify as fully funded.
- 4.3.3 The college may charge learners aged 16-18 for exam and re-sit charges if they do not achieve the required attendance levels or progress. Any part time courses attended by a learner already attending a programme of study with Warrington & Vale Royal College or alternative provider will pay a fee in accordance with the fee structure.

## 4.4 19-24 EHCP

- 4.4.1 For the purpose of funding and fees, learners aged between 19 and 24 on 31 August in the year they start their programme of study who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) will be treated the same as those aged 16-18.

## 4.5 Adult Learners

- 4.5.1 Adult learners taking courses funded by the ESFA will be charged a tuition fee and an awarding organisation fee for any qualification(s) taken.
- 4.5.2 Fee remission (full funding) is available to learners depending on their programme, personal circumstances and previous qualifications. Learners will receive fee remission in line with the [ESFA funded adult education budget: funding rules 2023 to 2024](#). The guidance is subject to change in year. When determining eligibility for fee remission, the rules applied will be those in place on the start date of each qualification in a learner's programme.
- 4.5.3 No compulsory additional charges relating to the direct costs of delivery will be made to adult learners where the College is claiming a full contribution to the costs of the learner's programme from the ESFA. Direct costs include administration, registration, assessment, materials or examination costs. They can also include charges for ID cards, uniforms, tools and materials where without them, a learner cannot complete and achieve their learning aim. Charges will be made for replacement items.
- 4.5.4 Learners that do not meet funding body eligibility criteria will be charged a fee that reflects the unsubsidised cost of the course and anticipated support requirements. The fee charged will approximate to the funding that the College would have received from the relevant funding body for a fully subsidised eligible learner for the course plus any funding associated with anticipated additional support. The fee may be varied at the discretion of the relevant Assistant Principal and with the authorisation of the Director of Finance.
- 4.5.5 Students wishing to take a course without undertaking assessment will be liable for tuition fees at the full unsubsidised cost of the course and will not be eligible for fee remission.

## 4.6 Community Learning

- 4.6.1 Adult learners attending community learning courses will be charged a tuition fee of £3 per hour.
- 4.6.2 The minimum course fee payable for any community learning course is £20.
- 4.6.3 Fee remission is available for adult learners attending community learning courses if any of the following conditions apply:
- The learner is employed and earns less than the real living wage.
  - The learner is retired and their income is less than the real living wage.
  - The learner is an asylum seeker and has been resident in the UK for 6 months or more.
  - The learner is in receipt of one of the following state benefits:
    - Universal Credit
    - Job Seekers Allowance
    - Employment and Support Allowance
    - Working Tax Credit
    - Housing Benefit
    - Income Support
    - Pension Credit
    - Council Tax Support (NOT 25% Single Person Discount)
    - Disability Living Allowance / Personal Independence Payment
- 4.6.4 Evidence for fee remission must be dated within 3 months the enrolment date.
- 4.6.5 Where there is a joint claim, both individuals are eligible for fee remission.
- 4.6.6 Adults referred to wellbeing courses from social services or the NHS will receive full fee remission.
- 4.6.7 No fees will be charged for courses designed to improve essential skills (English, maths and digital).
- 4.6.8 Fee remission is not available for residents of devolved authorities.

#### **4.7 Residents of Mayoral Combined Authorities**

- 4.7.1 Individuals resident in Mayoral Combined Authorities MCAs and the Greater London Authority GLA will be subject to funding rules as specified by their relevant devolved authority.
- 4.7.2 At the time of writing, the College has no funding agreements in place with any of the devolved authorities other than Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA).
- 4.7.3 Individuals resident in devolved authorities other than LCRCA, who wish to undertake learning that would ordinarily be funded under the ESFA AEB funding arrangements, receive no government funding and are therefore ineligible for fee remission and bursaries. Individuals enrolling on these courses will pay the advertised course fee.
- 4.7.4 Residents of authorities with which the College does not have a funding agreement must apply to the relevant authority to request funding for their qualification prior to starting their course. If the request is successful, the funding policy of the relevant devolved authority will be applied.

#### **4.8 Employer Fees**

- 4.8.1 Employers will be required to pay the full cost of the course for employees who are not eligible for either full tuition fee funding or co-funding.

#### **4.9 Apprentices**

- 4.9.1 For the 2023-24 academic year, employers will fall under two categories, levy-paying employers and non-levy paying employers.
- 4.9.2 Apprenticeship fees will be charged in line with the [2023 to 2024 apprenticeship funding rules](#)
- 4.9.3 All new apprentice starts with both levy and non-levy paying employers must be funded through the Digital Apprenticeship Service. An employer who does not pay the levy can reserve funds using the apprenticeship service or receive a levy transfer to access apprenticeship funding.
- 4.9.4 For non-levy paying employers, in line with ESFA funding rules, the college will not charge tuition fees to employers with fewer than 50 employees, for apprentices who are 16-18 year old or aged 19-24 formerly in care or with a local authority education health and care plan.
- 4.9.5 Where apprenticeship training is not funded through the apprenticeship levy (non-levy paying employers and levy paying employers with insufficient funds in their account) and the apprentice is not in one of the categories in 4.9.4, an employer is liable for co-investment and will be charged 5% of the total negotiated cost of training and assessment.
- 4.9.6 If the negotiated price for training and assessment is more than the maximum allowed by the funding band for the chosen apprenticeship, then the difference

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between the band maximum and the agreed price will be invoiced accordingly. This cannot be funded from the digital account or co-investment.

### 4.10 Payment of Fees by Advanced Learner Loans

- 4.10.1 For eligible learners, the Student Loan Company (SLC) will provide an advanced learner loan towards the cost of a learner's programme. The maximum loan amount is 100% of the ESFA weighted funding rate, or the College's fee amount if this is lower. Eligibility for the student loan is decided by the Student Loans Company.
- 4.10.2 19+ Advanced Learner Loans do not apply to Apprenticeship provision.
- 4.10.3 For Advanced Learner Loans students must be 19 or older (no maximum age limit) on the day the course starts, and must be studying one or more approved learning courses at Levels 3, 4, 5, or 6.
- 4.10.4 FE Learner liability for fees
- It is the learner's responsibility to ensure they apply directly to the SLC for the appropriate fee amount and to provide the relevant evidence and loan agreements and adhere to attendance requirements to ensure the fees are paid to the College.
  - Learners who do not have a fully approved loan by the SLC at the time of enrolment will be invoiced in full for any tuition fee due and will be liable for payment direct to the College until they provide written evidence of a tuition fee loan.
  - If the learner starts the course and then withdraws before the loan is fully approved the student is responsible for the outstanding fee payments the College would have received from the SLC.
  - If the learner withdraws or cancels their loan application with the SLC, but continues to attend, they are responsible for any payments the College would have received from the SLC.

### 4.11 Payment of fees by sponsors

- 4.11.1 Employers or other sponsors may pay all or part of a learner's fees on their behalf. Invoices to employers, other sponsors or high schools are payable in accordance with College terms of credit. Individual learners must bring a purchase order or letter of authorisation or recognised training voucher, clearly authorised by the sponsor, with them to enrolment or enclose it with the confirmation form.
- 4.11.2 The College reserves the right to decline acceptance of a sponsor.
- 4.11.3 The learner is responsible for any remaining fees and these should be paid directly or by payment arrangements on or before enrolment.



- 4.11.4 The College will invoice the sponsor or record the payment and complete the learner's enrolment.

### **4.12 School Pupils**

- 4.12.1 School pupils whatever their age taking evening courses funded by the ESFA will be charged the fees quoted in the prospectus. The enrolment of school pupils under 16 requires the prior approval of the school, the parent/guardian and the Curriculum Director with responsibility for 14-19 provision.
- 4.12.2 When school pupils, whatever their age, wish to follow part of their programme at College during school hours, the college will charge the school for the costs of this provision. Fees charged for this provision within the college will be charged in accordance with the relevant partnership agreement.

### **4.13 College Employees**

- 4.13.1 Tuition fees for ESFA funded courses attended by college employees may be waived in accordance with the Staff Development Policy. College employees will be charged an awarding organisation fee only, although this fee can also be waived if the course is considered as essential staff development. College employees will pay any awarding organisation fees for courses that are not considered as essential staff development.
- 4.13.2 In exceptional circumstances employees may gain approval by their line manager to attend full cost provision not funded by the ESFA. In these cases the fees may be charged to the relevant Staff Development budget. Fee may be waived if the course is viable without the additional staff member by approval of the Line Manager and Director.

### **4.14 Staff from Designated Voluntary/Community Organisations**

- 4.14.1 It is College policy to remit tuition fees for the staff of designated local voluntary and community organisations who enrol on ESFA funded courses at level 2 or below. Full fees are payable for courses at level 3 and above. Examination and other courses fees are not remitted.
- 4.14.2 In exceptional circumstances discounted tuition fees for staff from voluntary, community or partner organisations may be agreed.

### **4.15 Examination/Award Organisation Fees**

- 4.15.1 Learners aged 19 and over on ESFA funded courses, will be expected to pay awarding organisation (examination/ registration/certification) fees unless there is an entitlement for fee remission.
- 4.15.2 All students on full cost courses leading to external accreditation will be expected to pay awarding organisation fees.
- 4.15.3 All essential exam/awarding organisation fees are included in the fees payable at enrolment.

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- 4.15.4 Where a professional body requires direct payment of membership fees from the student, e.g.: AAT, they will not be collected at enrolment or paid for by the College.
- 4.15.5 Examination **resit** fees will be charged **prior** to entry. All students taking a resit examination must pay the resit fees and a centre fee. The only exception to this rule applies to functional skills/GCSE at the discretion of the Curriculum Director.
- 4.15.6 All learners in receipt of a free first attempt for an examination who do not take the examination without good reason will be charged the fee.
- 4.15.7 If a learner's examination entry is not supported by his/her tutor as a result of poor attendance or lack of progress the examination fee is charged.
- 4.15.8 External candidates may sit an exam at the College for an administration fee of £60.00 plus the relevant examination fee. This must be paid in full in advance. An external candidate is defined as an individual who is not enrolled on the course which the exam relates to.

### 4.16 Student Liability for fees

- 4.16.1 All learners become liable for the full course fee 5 working days prior to the commencement of the course.
- 4.16.2 Learners who withdraw from their course or are withdrawn by the College are liable for the full tuition fee.

### 4.17 Refunds

- 4.17.1 A refund or waiver of remaining instalment payments will be applicable in the following circumstances:
- The course is cancelled by the College
  - The course day / time is changed which prevents the learner's attendance.
  - The learner has paid a fee but is entitled to remission.
  - Notification of a learner's intention to cancel their place on the course is received by the College 5 working days prior to the commencement of the course.
  - Where a learner transfers from one course to another, the difference in course fees will be refunded/waived where applicable. The learner will pay the difference should there be a higher fee.
  - Where a formal complaint has been upheld in relation to the quality of the course in accordance with the college's complaints procedure.
- 4.17.2 An administration fee of £30 will be deducted from all refunds where the learner has requested withdrawal, unless a complaint, made through the official complaints procedure, has been upheld. Where fees are £30 or less no refund will be due.

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- 4.17.3 Refunds will be processed within 14 working days of the refund request being received by the Finance department.
- 4.17.4 Exceptional circumstances:
- Refunds/fee waivers outside of the above criteria will only be made at the discretion of the college and this will only be under exceptional circumstances. Requests outside of the above criteria must be submitted to the Finance department via an official Refund/Fee Waiver Request form.
  - The College cannot accept responsibility for changes in learner circumstances brought about by employers, illness etc. Any claims for refunds/fee waivers in these cases will be individually assessed by the Director of Finance whose decision is final.
  - A credit note may be issued in exceptional circumstances. Any credit note issued will be calculated on the basis of the number of actual attendances less a 10% administrative charge.
- 4.17.5 Fees will not be refunded where course closure is temporary due to fire, flood or other force majeure, adverse weather conditions or industrial action.
- 4.17.6 Learners have the right to appeal against decisions made regarding the refund of fees. The appeal can be submitted in accordance with the complaints policy.

### 4.18 Appeals

- 4.18.1 Appeals must be made in writing.
- 4.18.2 Within ten working days of receiving the appeal, the Curriculum Director will investigate and decide on the appeal.
- 4.18.3 The decision will be communicated to the learner in writing.
- 4.18.4 The decision is final and all parties will be expected to abide by the decision.

### 4.19 Methods of Payment

- 4.19.1 Payment in full can be made by cash or debit/credit card.
- 4.19.2 Learners can pay in instalments via a standing order providing an agreement is completed at the time of application/enrolment.
- 4.19.3 The duration of the course will determine maximum number of instalments over which fees can be paid. The full fee must be paid before the course is completed.
- 4.19.4 Where an employer is paying the fee the full fee must be paid at the start of the course.

### 4.20 Non-payment of fees

- 4.20.1 Non-payment of fees or failure to agree suitable terms of payment may result in the learner losing access to College facilities and resources (e.g. computer and Learning Resource Centre) or could result in the learner being removed from the course until the outstanding debts are settled. All outstanding fees will be subject to debt recovery processes which may involve a third party organisation.
- 4.20.2 Standing order agreements cancelled by the learner will result in full, outstanding fees becoming payable immediately. The College reserves the right to charge a £15 dishonour fee for cancelled or failed standing order payments.
- 4.20.3 Enrolment on a course will be refused where there are outstanding fees relating to previous enrolments or academic years. Learners will have waived their right to pay by standing order and all fees must be paid in full on enrolment.

### 4.21 Debtors

- 4.21.1 In accordance with College Financial Regulations for any learner who has not paid their tuition or exam fees in full at the end of the academic year:
  - Exam certificates will be withheld
  - Assessed work will not be marked
  - References for employment will not be issued
  - The learner will not be permitted to progress to the next year of study or enrol on another course at the college

## 5 Monitoring

The college will report performance in relation to the collection of fee income against targets to ELT/SLT and the Corporation in the monthly Management Accounts.

## 6 Agreement to Pay

### AGREEMENT TO PAY FOR COURSE

<b>Student Name</b>		<b>Ref No</b>	
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**It is important you read this document as it outlines your liability for fees and terms you agree to once enrolled.**

- I understand I become liable for the cost of the course five working days prior to the start of the course.
- I understand refunds will not normally be given, although a credit note may be issued where considered appropriate; requests for refunds relating to exceptional, personal circumstances must be made in writing.
- I understand if I wish to withdraw before the start of the course, I will be entitled to a refund providing the request is received by the College in writing at least five working days before the scheduled start date, and a £30 admin charge will be applied.

#### **If paying by standing order you agree to:**

Pay for my course by monthly instalments as per the agreement set up at enrolment.

I understand that if I start my course and withdraw before the standing order is fully paid I am responsible for any future payments.

I understand that if I do not make payment of any standing order by its due date, then the agreement will be null and void and the total fee will become payable immediately.

#### **If funding a course with a Higher Education or Advanced Learning Loan you agree to:**

Pay for the course by taking out a loan from the Student Loans Company (SLC)

I understand that until my loan has been fully approved on the SLC portal I am personally responsible for payment of any outstanding fees. Please note, the first payment by SLC is made 2 weeks after the start date of the course.

I understand that if my loan application is not successful then I will be personally responsible for payment of fees.

I understand that if I start my course and withdraw before the loan is fully approved I am responsible for any payments the college would have received from the SLC.

I understand that if I withdraw or cancel my loan application with the SLC, but continue to attend college, then I am personally responsible for all payments to the college for my course, including those that would have been received from the SLC

<b>Student Signature</b>		<b>Date</b>	
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**See College website for full enrolment terms & conditions: - <https://www.wvr.ac.uk/policies-procedures/>**

- Tuition & Examination Fees & Appeals Procedure
- Higher Education, Tuition Fees, Break in Learning & Refunds Policy (This applies to our HNC/D and Education & Training Programmes only)