

Fees Policy

2021/22

Further Education Courses

APPROVED BY The Board of Governors on 27 September 2021

Applies to:	
Harrogate College	X
Keighley College	X
Leeds City College	X
Leeds Conservatoire	
White Rose Academies Trust	

CHANGE CONTROL

Version:	2021-22 v2	
Approved by:	SELT	
Date approved:	March 2022	
Name of author:	Donna Lenton	
Name of responsible committee:	College boards	
Related policies: (list)	Admissions Policy Customer complaints procedure Student Financial Support Fund Policy Fees refund and recovery policy Financial Regulations Higher Education Fees Policy	
Equality impact assessment completed	Date:	
	Assessment type	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Full	
	<input type="checkbox"/> Part	
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Not required	
Policy will be communicated via:	Staff intranet and colleges' website	
Next review date:	June 2022	

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1. Policy Statement

Colleges' fees are set to ensure that, in line with funding body expectations and after public funding is taken into account, the colleges are able to cover the costs of every programme of study and make a contribution to their overhead costs.

2. Context and reasons for the policy

2.1. The colleges Further Education fees policy is set annually based on the guidance from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and the devolved authority - West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) regarding eligibility for funding and fees.

3. Policy Objectives

3.1. Our staff, students, prospective students and students' employers and sponsors will understand:

- What the colleges' fees are
- What additional charges may be made as part of the programme
- When and how the colleges' fees are payable

4. Policy

General

4.1. The colleges' fees comply with Government and Devolved Authority funding directives and are designed to contribute to the full costs the colleges incur in delivering education and training to all students. The colleges will not change fees on a programme of study more than once a year (unless there are significant changes in Government policy that impacts on the colleges' ability to deliver the programme).

The colleges will not change fees for individual learners who are part-way through an agreed programme of study e.g. where a learner is under 19 at the start of an FE funded programme of study, they will benefit from the free tuition /exam fee policy for any consecutive study of the same programme of study, even if in a subsequent academic year of study, they are over 19.

4.2. Devolution of adult education functions

As of 1 August 2019 the funding of learners aged 19 undertaking adult education funded courses (AEB) who reside within devolved authority areas are subject to funding rules set out and published by the devolved authority. As a result of this change this fees policy only applies to AEB funded individuals who are eligible for funding within the ESFAs AEB funding rules which does not include any individual who is resident within the devolved authorities.

For the funding year 20/21 the devolved authorities are:

- The Greater Manchester Combined Authority
- The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
- The West of England Combined Authority
- The West Midlands Combined Authority
- The Tees Valley Combined Authority
- The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority
- The Greater London Authority

- North Tyneside and Northumberland Combined Authority
- Sheffield Combined Authority
- West Yorkshire Combined Authority

The college currently has funding agreements in place with the ESFA and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) only. As result, this fees policy only applies to funded individuals who reside either within the WYCA or with the ESFA funded areas.

The college receives no AEB funding for individuals who reside in any other devolved area and will as such be liable for full cost fees. Where the learner may be entitled to full or partial funding within their own devolved authority, learners will be informed of this during the application and enrolment process.

The devolved authority (WYCA) determine their own funding and eligibility rules, which in some instances may differ to the ESFA rules for specific aims or cohorts of learners. Where this is the case it will be clearly identified in this policy.

The policy will be updated to reflect any changes in funding agreements with funding agencies and any future devolution deals.

4.3. Eligibility for Funding and Fees

The basis for funding and fees for individuals is based on the ESFA's/WYCA's published funding rules and college policy, as such they may be subject to amendments and clarifications, this includes but is not limited to the criteria for residency eligibility. Where required these changes will be made in subsequent iterations of the fees policy.

4.4. Fees

The colleges' fees may be made up of several elements:

- Tuition fees
- Awarding body registration fees or examination and certification fees
- Course specific charges

4.5. Colleges' fees vary according to your age, your level of study, qualifications on entry, the type of programme you are studying and where/how the course is delivered.

4.6. Colleges' fees are payable in advance, and for programmes of study which last for more than one year, are payable separately for each year of study.

4.7. Colleges' fees and examination fees (where applicable) are normally collected at enrolment, except:

- Where you are being sponsored, for example by an employer, the learner must provide written confirmation from your sponsor/ employer at the point of enrolment (an invoice will be sent out to the sponsor). Where the learner is unable to provide confirmation at enrolment, they are still entitled to enrol, however fee liability transfers to the learner, until such time as written sponsor/employer confirmation is received.
- Where you are entitled to remission as set out in the ESFA/WYCA funding rules.
- Where you are funding your course through an Advanced Learner Loan which has been approved.
- For certain examination fees for courses where the decision on which examination is to be sat is taken after some weeks of tuition (e.g. some language courses).

4.8. Awarding body registration fees, examination and certification fees are derived from actual awarding body charges.

4.9. The course specific charge relates to the costs of consumables, course specific computer licences, educational trips, specific course related library resources, attendance on residential trips, materials, equipment, uniforms, Disclosure & Barring Service (DBS) checks, food, artwork, professional body subscriptions etc. Some of these are purchased through the college, some through negotiated third party deals. These charges will be notified in the course information and will be applied consistently. These charges may be made after enrolment, but once billed, must be paid by you or your sponsor (if applicable).

4.10. Where the course of study is required to have a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check and

you are entitled to fee remission and do not pay fees, or you are funding your course through an Advanced Learner Loan you will not be charged. However, if the learning is associated with your employment, your employer is responsible for carrying out and paying for this check.

4.11. Ideally, all fees due must be paid before you can be entered for any examination. If, for any reason, you have been registered for an examination, and your fees have not been fully settled, the certificate or award may be withheld to you until your debt has been settled in full. For further information, please contact the Director of Finance.

4.12. The colleges will charge full fees for students who do not meet the ESFA's eligibility criteria (see section 10 – eligible students) on government/WYCA funded further education courses in accordance with funding directives (i.e. a minimum of 100% of the weighted value rate for the qualification).

4.13. The colleges will charge a commercial rate of fees for all students on courses not funded by the government, as there is no funding subsidy.

4.14. Learner Support Funds

In exceptional circumstances elements of a learner's fees may be subsidised by awards from the Learner Support Funds (LSF). These awards are for students who face financial difficulty and have made a successful claim for assistance with fees through the fund. These awards will be in line with the colleges' Student Financial Support Funds Policy and will constitute full or part payment of the colleges' fees.

4.15. The ESFA/WYCA will not fund any students repeating qualifications/learning aims they have already achieved (with the exception of GCSEs where the grades were below a C or grade 4 and the student is undertaking the full course). Any repeat qualifications or re-sits will be charged at a full cost rate.

4.16. For the academic year 2021/22 there have been changes to the eligibility for funding for EU and EEA learners, which means these learners no longer automatically qualify for funding. For individuals

impacted by these changes there will be a requirement to confirm residency status via the eligibility form and confirmation of immigration status in order to inform what funding is available to the individual.

- 4.17. If a learner falsely declares their eligibility to funding or remission, i.e. residency, prior attainment, qualifications, employment status or income in order to claim fee remission and/or funding that they are not entitled to, the college retains the right to invoice the learner any loss of fees/funding and additional costs incurred and may withdraw learners from their programme of study.

5. Setting the fee rate

5.1. Further education courses

The minimum fee level for adult (19 plus) further education courses is set at the fee remission value as determined by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA)/WYCA. For 2021/2022 this is 50% of the un-weighted rate for the qualification per year, plus examination fees and course specific charges for those aged 19+ who are studying at, or below level 2. There is a minimum tuition fee of £1,100 for full time courses at level 2 or below.

In the case of English as a Second Language (ESOL) qualifications, the college will charge a fee set at £3 per course planned delivery hour, plus exams /accreditation fees.

For students aged 19 or over on Level 3 and above qualifications where either the learner or the qualification aim is not eligible for funding under the Lifetime Skills Guarantee funding (Level 3 legal entitlement or National Skills Fund) the fee level is set at a minimum of 100% at the weighted rate for the qualification. Where the student is “topping up” and has already achieved elements of the qualification, the college will reduce the amount charged and will apply Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL).

Students aged 19 and above who enrol to designated level 3 or above qualifications and are liable to pay tuition fees under this fees policy may be eligible to take out an Advanced Learner Loan to contribute in full or in part to the costs of their fees. These are available via Student Finance England (SFE), Information and terms and conditions are available at <https://www.gov.uk/advanced-learning-loans>

5.2. International Students

The colleges do not sponsor international students on Tier 4 visas. Learners who wish to enrol on FE courses, are legally resident but not do meet the funding agencies criteria for funding (ie residency eligibility) are able to enrol. These learners will be charged at a full cost rate to cover all costs associated with the programme of study and as set out by the college department concerned.

5.3. Commercial rate courses

The fee for commercial rate (full cost recovery) courses is a minimum of £150 per teaching hour. Any variation to this will only be authorised by the Chief Financial Officer

5.4. Awarding body registration /exam fees

All registration /exam fees are charged within a band based on awarding body charges.

5.5. Schools collaborative provision

The fees for schools are:

- The rate in Leeds for individual places on vocational provision is £17.50 per hour. Group rates will be subject to negotiation.
- The rate in Keighley for individual places on vocational provision is £17.50 per hour. Group rates will be subject to negotiation.
- Group rate in Leeds and Keighley - £115 per hour on school premises.
- Alternative curriculum- individual rate is £17.50 per hour on college premises.

5.6. Community Learning Provision

The colleges engage in community learning provision on behalf of the ESFA/WYCA and Leeds City Council.

Pound Plus Fee Remission Policy (CLP delivery)

Where the provision is funded directly to the college by the ESFA/WYCA as part of its contracted delivery (CLP) the colleges' FE fees remission policy will apply. The tuition fee rate will be set at £3 per teaching hour plus any additional examination/registration costs fees are payable by students. If the student is eligible for a waiver under the ESFA/WYCA funding rules then the tuition and exam fees will be waived in line with college policy.

Leeds City Council applies its own fees policy which the college implements on its behalf. The policy for 2021/2022 will be made available to staff and students on the college website.

5.7. Apprenticeships

Employers are required to contribute to the costs of training for apprentices in line with government policy. This co-investment will be negotiated with the employer. Please see Apprenticeship policy for further details.

5.8. Higher Education

The Higher Education Fees Policy is a separated document, available on request and on the colleges' website.

6. Fee remission

6.1. The colleges will remit fees as shown below (these do not apply to students under the age of 16, or those who do not meet the residency eligibility - please ask for further details):

- If you are between 16 and 18 on 31 August 2021, or 19-23 with an ECHP and are on an agreed programme of further education, are eligible for Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) funding and not studying at any other institution or undertaking an apprenticeship at any other institution, the college will not charge for your tuition, awarding body registration, or examination fees. If you or the course is not funded by the ESFA (i.e. Full Cost) then you will be expected to pay the fees as advertised.
- If you are aged 19 or over and are studying Basic English and Maths qualifications which are classified as legal entitlements by the DfE (Department for Education) (i.e. Functional Skills) and **not ESOL**, you are eligible for fee remission for tuition and exam or awarding body registration fees. This is on condition that the qualification being studied is at a level higher than previously obtained with either the college or any other institution, regardless of awarding organisation.
- If you do not hold a GCSE at Grade C/Grade 4 or above in Maths and English Language and are studying GCSE English and Maths you will be eligible for remission on tuition and examination fees for these qualifications. This is on the understanding that you are enrolling to undertake and participate in a full course of learning and not just re-taking the examination. If you have previously achieved a GCSE Grade C (4) in English or Maths and wish to improve your grade, there is

no funding available, regardless of employment status and full cost tuition and examination fees are payable.

- If you are 19+ and are studying Information technology aims designated by the DfE as “Essential Digital Skills” up to and including level 1, have digital skills assessed at below level 1 and have not already achieved an IT qualification at Level 1 or above.
- If you are aged 19-23 or over on 31 August 2021, studying at Level 1 and below, and are unemployed, you will not be charged tuition, exam or awarding body registration fees. This will be on the basis that you declare to us that you meet the definition of Unemployed as set out in the AEB Funding Rules
- If you are 19-23 or over on 31 August 2021 studying at level 1 and below, employed and earn a low income as defined by the AEB funding rules (£17,374.50 gross per annum for 2021/22) then you will not be charged tuition, exam or awarding body registration fees. This will be on the basis you are able to demonstrate your employment and income by providing appropriate evidence (i.e. 3 months wage slips or employment contract)
- If you are aged 24+ and studying at Level 2 and below, and are unemployed, you will not be charged tuition, exam or awarding body registration fees. This will be on the basis that you declare to us that you meet the definition of Unemployed as set out in the AEB Funding Rules.
- If you are 24 or over on 31 August 2021 studying at level 2 and below, employed and earn a low wage as defined by the funding rules (£17,374.50 gross per annum for 19/20) then you will not be charged tuition, exam or awarding body

registration fees. This will be on the basis able to demonstrate your income by providing appropriate evidence (i.e. 3 months wage slips or employment contract)

- If you are 19-23 and studying a level 2 or 3 qualification which has been classified by the ESFA as a legal entitlement (other than level 3 Access courses) in the classroom; or progressing to a level 2 qualification via entry or Level 1 courses, you will not pay tuition, exam or awarding body registration fees, on confirmation that you will be progressing. Confirmation of prior attainment and entitlement to this remission will be checked against the Personal Learner Record (PLR).
- If you are 19-23 and undertaking a level 2 course and do not already hold a level 2 qualification then the qualification must be classified as a legal entitlement in order to qualify for funding and fee remission. If the qualification is not a legal entitlement, your course is not funded by under the AEB funding rules and will be treated as a full cost enrolment and fees may be charged accordingly regardless of income or employment status.
- If you are 19-24 with a learning difficulty or disability and your place in college has been commissioned as a 'High Needs' placement by your Local Authority, you will not be charged any fees.

7. Refunds and transfers

7.1. The colleges operate a no refund policy for cancellations by an employer or applicant, except in limited circumstances. The full policy on fee refunds and recovery is available on the colleges' websites.

8. Payments policy

- 8.1. All students will be expected to make arrangements to pay their fees at the time of enrolment. The colleges accept payments by all major credit and debit cards, cheque and cash.
- 8.2. The colleges offer instalment payments by direct debit. Instalment payments are allowed on long courses (usually over 20 weeks) with a minimum value of £100, with an initial payment of 25% of the course fee. The rest of the fee is payable over a maximum of 6 further direct debit payments, as determined by the Director of Financial Resources. Courses which last fewer than 20 weeks, where the student has to pay not less than £200, will also be allowed to offer instalment payments, providing that the final payment is due before the expected end date of the student on the course.
- 8.3. Payments by instalment can include the cost of examination and registration fees. The debt on the exam/registration fees will be reduced first, followed by the tuition fees.
- 8.4. Employers will be invoiced for fees as soon as possible after the start of the course and will pay in accordance with the college's standard terms of business (30 days from date of invoice). Any transfer of fee liability from student to employer will require written confirmation of sponsorship from sponsor/employer.
- 8.5. Where examination or awarding body registration charges apply, students will be required to make payment in full before the entry can be processed.
- 8.6. In exceptional circumstances, a student's fees (examination /registration fees and course specific charges) may be paid in full or part by application to the Discretionary Learner Support Fund.
- 8.7. Where a student has informed the colleges that they intended to take out an Advanced Learner Loan to cover fees they remain liable for the tuition fees until the loan has been approved and payments received by the college from the Student Loan Company. If the student fails to apply for the

loan or it is not approved or ineligible, or the loan is cancelled; then the student must make arrangements to ensure fees are paid. Failure to do so may result in the student being withdrawn from their course and action taken in accordance with Section 9 of this policy to recover outstanding debt.

9. Failure to pay

- 9.1. Students are personally liable for payment of any tuition fees owed to the college. Failure to pay the agreed tuition fees or to pay agreed arrangements may result in the student being withdrawn from the course, but are still liable for any outstanding fees.
- 9.2. Students with outstanding debts will not be permitted to re-enrol for any further courses in either the current or future academic years until all debts have been paid.
- 9.3. The college will take reasonable steps to recover debts which may include the use of a debt collection agency and/or other legal action.
- 9.4. The colleges will take all reasonable steps to advise and support students in financial difficulty. Any student who is in financial difficulty should seek advice from the Student Life team as soon as possible.

10. Definitions

- 10.1. "Eligible students" are defined as those who meet the ESFA's eligibility criteria, as outlined in the ESFA's funding rules as apply to the student's circumstances.
- 10.2. The age for funding purposes is normally determined by the age on 31 August in the academic year when the learner begins a programme of study. However, in the case of student on Apprenticeship funded programmes and 19+ level 3 provision and over, the age is at the start of the programme (further guidance on this can be provided on request).
- 10.3. Unemployed

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

- receive Jobseekers' Allowance (JSA), including those receiving National Insurance credits only
- receive Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- receive Universal Credit, and their take home pay as recorded on their Universal Credit statement (disregarding benefits) is less than £345 a month (learner is sole adult in their benefit claim) or £552 a month (learner has a joint benefit claim with their partner)
- are released on temporary licence and studying outside a prison environment and are not funded through the Offenders' Learning and Skills Service (OLASS).

The college may, at its discretion, may fund other learners if all of the following apply:

- The learner receives other state benefits and their take home pay (disregarding Universal credits) is £345 a month (individual claims) or £552 a month (household claims), and
- The learner wants to be employed, or progress into more sustainable employment, their take home pay is less than £345 a month (individual claims) or £552 a month (household claims) and the college is satisfied that the learning is directly relevant to their employment prospects and the local labour market needs.

11. Contacts

- Director of Finance
- Director of MIS
- Head of Funding and Planning

12. Responsibility

- It is the responsibility of all staff to adhere to the policy and to advise students and potential students accordingly.

- It is the responsibility of the MIS and Finance teams to publicise and enforce the policy.

13. Conclusion

The adoption of this policy will enable the colleges to fund their courses appropriately in line with government guidance and good business practice, for the overall benefit of student.

14. Changes to previous versions of the policy:

In line with funding agency policies, the following changes/clarifications have been made to the colleges' fees policies:

1. With the introduction of the **Level 3 Adult offer effective from 1 April 2021**. Learners aged 19-23 and 24 without a full level 3 qualification who wish to undertake an aim on the National Skills Qualification list will be entitled to remission and no mandatory fees should be charged. This entitlement is available only for enrolments that start on or after 1 April 2021, and cannot be backdated or claimed in retrospect. If qualifications are subsequently added to the National Skills fund offer, any entitlements cannot be back-dated or applied in retrospect.
2. **Learners in receipt of Low wage**, with effect from **1 April 2022**, the definition of low wage had increased in line with the National Living wage rates to **£18,525** gross annual salary. This change is for any learners/enrolments which commence on or after that date and cannot be applied in retrospect or back-dated. Evidence of the wage must be seen, and dated within 3 months of the learner's start date.
3. **Expansion of the Level 3 Adult Offer** with effect from **1 April 2022**. Learners aged 19+ who have achieved a level 3 qualification or higher before 1 April 2021 will be fully funded if they are undertaking an aim on the National Skills fund list and meet the ESFA/WYCA definition of low wage or unemployed as set out previously in this document.
4. **Clarification of Level 3 Adult Entitlement with effect from 1 April 2021**. The National Skills Fund list includes short qualifications (category 49). Learners are able to take one short qualification from the list and then progress to a larger designated qualification, as long as the short qualification commenced after 1 April 2021. The entitlement to National Skills Fund is exhausted once the learner achieved the aim/s set out as above. If qualifications are further expansions to eligibility for funding are subsequently added to the Adult Level 3 offer, any entitlements cannot be back-dated or applied in retrospect.

The changes above are applicable to learners funded by the ESFA or WYCA.

Further changes:

Paragraph 5.2, International students, clarification of college policy and fee rates for internal students those learners not meeting residency criteria for funding purposes.

