

Fees Policy 2015/16

POLICY STATEMENT:

The College is committed to maintaining a fair and transparent policy for the setting of fees for the delivery of publicly funded and non-funded courses. In establishing such a policy the College takes account of Government Policy, the needs of its local communities as well as local and national economic conditions.

The objective of the policy is to set the framework of charges that are applied both for publicly funded and non-funded courses. This policy applies to all College campuses; Broadstairs, Dover and Folkestone.

POLICY DETAILS:

All College staff involved in advice, guidance, enquiries, applications and enrolment will be able to explain and justify the following:-

1. The total fees and charges for undertaking each programme of study
2. The different elements which constitute such fees
3. When and how fees are payable
4. How courses that are additional to main programmes of study are treated for fee purposes
5. The regulations imposed by external bodies, with regard to the remission of fees
6. The College's refund procedures
7. The appropriate support mechanisms to address issues of financial hardship (the Discretionary Learner Support Fund)

8. This policy will be reviewed once a year except where significant changes in Government policy necessitate a more immediate review.
9. No change to the fee structure should disadvantage students part way through a programme of study (e.g. where a student is under 19 at the start of a Publicly Funded programme of study, they will benefit from the free tuition and examination fees throughout their programme of study even though they may be 19 years old at the start of their subsequent year of study).
10. The College aims to comply with the directives on fees from the Public Funding bodies and other relevant funding bodies, but will also take into consideration other factors including but not limited to likely impact on students and recruitment levels.
11. The fees set by the College will aim to cover the full costs for delivering education and training.
12. The actual fee charged for each course will be determined by the College's Executive Team and will be published annually. The Fees will be determined taking into account the current funding guidelines, college targets and prevailing market conditions.
13. The College reserves the right to withhold examination entries and abstain from claiming for certification in the event of having overdue course related debt.

Fees for Publicly Funded Courses

14. Fees can be defined as :-
 - a. Mandatory fees
 - b. Optional fees
15. Students eligible for remitted fees will not be charged any fees that are considered mandatory to achieve their qualification(s).
16. Students ineligible for remitted fees will be charged all the fees that are considered mandatory to achieve their qualification. The discretionary learner support fund can provide support towards costs, where financial need can be demonstrated.
17. With the exception of students on an agreed instalment plan, mandatory fees are payable in full in advance of the start of the course. For courses that last for more than one year, mandatory fees are payable separately for each year of study at a level set at the start of the programme, unless otherwise stated. The subsequent year's fees only include tuition and other additional mandatory fees.
18. For fees of £300 and over, an individual may set up an instalment plan at or prior to enrolment. Where a student provides evidence that they are to be sponsored by their employer or other organisation, fees will be invoiced to the sponsor and must be paid prior to the commencement of the course. Students may be given opportunities in addition to their core programme. Any fees related to these opportunities may be charged to all students
19. Students whom are aged 24 and over and wish to study programmes which are at level 3 and above may be eligible to apply for an Advanced Learning Loan. Application should be made direct to the Student Loans Company and a letter of confirmation that the loan has been granted should be produced by the end of the first term, failure to do so will result in the student being removed from the course. The loan only covers fees for the period that the student attends College and is paid direct to the College on a monthly basis. In the event that a student should withdraw, loan payments will cease and any fees outstanding will become payable in full by the student.

Fees for Non Funded or Full Cost Courses

20. Irrespective of the student's status there are no remitted fees for these courses; they must be paid in full. These students are not eligible for support from the discretionary learner support fund, but other support may be available.

Fees for Learners who are not Eligible for Public Funding

21. The College sets a commercially viable level equivalent to publicly funded rates for all non- 'Home-based' students studying Further or Higher education funded courses, i.e. students residing outside the EEA and/or those who do not satisfy the funding bodies' residency eligibility criteria. These fees must cover the full cost of the programme, due to the absence of public funding. Fees must be paid in full before the start of the course and there is no remission available for these students. It is the student's responsibility to obtain the appropriate visas and other relevant documentation to enable them to legally undertake the programme of study in England. These students are not eligible for support from the discretionary learner support fund, but other support may be available.

Additionality

22. Where a programme of study is recognised as encompassing a number of individual qualification aims these will be treated as a single programme for the purpose of calculating fees.
23. Where a student wishes to enrol on further unrelated courses, additional fees will be payable.

Payment

24. Fees are payable at enrolment by the following methods:
 - Cash
 - Credit or Debit Card (in person or on-line)
 - Approved Instalment Plan (EEA residents only, subject to status) via Direct Debit
 - Bank Transfer (please contact our Finance Team for further details)
25. Where students elect to pay their course fees by an approved instalment plan, a 20% deposit is payable at enrolment with the remaining balance paid over a maximum of 6 consecutive monthly payments, or where the course is shorter than this, at least 6 weeks before the expected end date of the course. Documentation (i.e bank statement) providing evidence of bank details must be presented at the time of enrolment in order to set up direct debit payments. Direct debits can only be made from a bank account with a UK sort code.
26. In the event of failure to meet any Direct Debit / Instalment Plan commitment, the full fee will become due for immediate payment, and the College will actively seek to recover this debt.

Refunds

27. Where a course is closed or cancelled by the College a full refund will automatically be made to all students enrolled without request.
28. Should a student decide to withdraw from a course, no refund will be granted.
29. If a student is dismissed for misconduct, no refund will be granted.
30. In the case of cancellations made by an employer or sponsor in advance of 48 hours of the start of the course, the College will offer credit towards other offerings of the course or alternative courses, which should be redeemed within 12 months. Cancellations within 48 hours of the start of the course or after the commencement of the course will not be offered credit.

Definitions

31. 'Publicly Funded' is defined as those courses funded by:-
 - a. 'Skills Funding Agency' (SFA) responsible for funding 19+ Classroom-based and workplace learning and apprenticeships.
 - b. 'Education Funding Agency' (EFA) is responsible for funding 14-18 delivery and 19-24 high cost, high needs students
32. 'Additionality' is defined as the extra courses which, together with the primary course, form a cohesive programme of study e.g. first aid for learners studying child care, food hygiene being mandatory before students can do any food preparation or cooking.
33. 'Home-based' students are defined as having been domiciled in the European Economic Area

(EEA) for the last 3 years or more. Currently this comprises Austria, Belgium, Bulgaria, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Ireland, Italy, Latvia, Liechtenstein, Lithuania, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, Norway, Poland, Portugal, Romania, Slovak Republic, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Also included are the overseas territories of the countries above, a complete list can be found on the Nationality Eligibility Form.

34. 'Full Time' is any programme of learning which lasts at least 540 guided learning hours within a 12 month period.
35. 'Funding Age' for workplace learning or apprenticeships is the age at the start of the programme. For all other funding provision it is the age of the learner on 1st September in the year in which they start a programme of study.
36. 'Fees' - Fees are composed of the following elements:-
 - a. Mandatory fees. The following are fees that the College has identified are mandatory to achieve a course:-
 - i. tuition fees
 - ii. awarding body registration fees
 - iii. examination and/or certification
 - iv. other additional fees (if applicable)
 - b. Optional fees. Students are given a broad range of opportunities in addition to the mandatory requirements of their courses. If the student wishes to purchase, for example, their own personal kits, uniform or go on additional trips, they have the opportunity to do so at their own cost.
37. 'Remission Categories' and 'Remitted Fees' students studying a publicly funded programme of study who are in receipt of 'active benefits', or who satisfy other remission criteria, such as aged 19-23 studying a first level 2 programme, aged 19-23 studying a first level 3 programme or studying a Skills for Life programme (excluding ESOL), cannot be charged the mandatory fees shown above.
38. 'Active benefits' are Job Seekers Allowance or Employment Support Allowance - Work Related Activity Group (ESA WRAG). The ESA WRAG group were those previously claiming Incapacity Allowance that have been assessed as being able to enter the labour market. Students who are claiming other state benefits, who are not working and are actively seeking employment may 'Self Declare' and receive the same remission support as those on 'active benefits'.
39. Students can purchase kit, equipment etc, for their own use. Students may be charged for any ingredients, kit or items they wish to take home. Trips which are not mandatory to the success of the student's programme may be charged.