



Fees Policy 2021/22

Author	Anthony McGarel Deputy Principal & Chief Executive
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1. Introduction

- 1.1. This policy is approved by the Board of Governors of South Essex College and sets out the way in which tuition and other fees payable are set.
- 1.2. In setting the fees policy for 2021/22 the College recognise that there is a balance to be found between maximising the income from fees and the potential barrier to learning that this approach might create.

2. Objectives

- 2.1. This policy is intended to:
 - 2.1.1 Set out the College's approach to the fees charged for the education and training that it offers.
 - 2.1.2. Ensure the College complies with guidance issued by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and Office for Students (OfS).
 - 2.1.3. Set out the ways in which the College can assist in circumstances where the fees charged may pose a barrier to entry for learners.

3. General Principles

- 3.1. Learners or their sponsor, unless they qualify for exemptions, will be charged:
 - 3.1.1 A tuition fee
 - 3.1.2 Any awarding organisation fees. This would typically be in the form of exam fees or registration fees although other fees may be applicable in certain circumstances.
 - 3.1.3 The cost of equipment and /or materials that will be required for the completion of the course. Any equipment purchased is the learner's property and will remain so on completion of the course.
 - 3.1.4. The cost of any educational visits or trips they attend that may make up part of the course.
- 3.2 Fees are generally payable annually. For example, a fee will be payable for each year of a two-year course. Fees may be subject to annual increases and any fees quoted relate to the current year only unless explicitly stated otherwise.
- 3.3. Fees are payable at enrolment. If fees are being paid by instalment, a sponsor or advanced learning loan the relevant declarations must be in place prior to the commencement of the course.
- 3.4. A learner's eligibility for funding, or any funding remission, is assessed at initial enrolment onto a course. The assessed eligibility remains for the duration of the course.

4. Funded Courses (excluding Apprenticeships) – Learners aged 16-18 and aged 19-24 with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP)

- 4.1. Learners on funded courses who are aged 16-18 will be funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).
- 4.2. Learners who are aged 19-24 and who have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) are also funded by the ESFA on the same basis as 16-18 year olds. Throughout this policy where 16-18 year olds are referred this includes this group of learners.
- 4.3. Learners are usually required to have resided in the United Kingdom or European Union for the previous 3 years to be eligible for ESFA funding. There are exceptions to this rule which are set out in the ESFA Funding Regulations 2020/21. The College will assess a learner's eligibility prior to their enrolment on a course and any payment of fees.
- 4.4. For the purposes of eligibility to ESFA funding a learner's age is calculated on the 31st August of the academic year they begin their course. This means a learner aged 18 who starts on a two year course will retain their status as a 16-18 year old for the duration of their course. This does not apply to learners who turn 19 and progress to a level 3 extended diploma after completing another full level 3, e.g. a subsidiary diploma or a 90 credit diploma.
- 4.5. Learners who are aged 16-18 and are eligible for ESFA funding will not pay tuition fees for their course.
- 4.6. These learners will not be charged any awarding organisation registration or examination fees other than those set out in 4.8 and 4.9
- 4.7. These learners will not be charged fees for any Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check relating to their course requirements.
- 4.8. In the event a learner does not meet the 90% minimum attendance requirement the College reserves the right to request a voluntary contribution from the learner towards any awarding organisation fees that have been incurred for the initial sitting and any subsequent resits.
- 4.9. Where a learner fails to attend a notified examination and cannot produce either a medical certificate or evidence of significant extenuating circumstances which would justify the non-attendance the College reserves the right to charge for any resit.
- 4.10. Some courses offered by the College may offer equipment, material or uniform for students to purchase for use and retain within and outside of the college. In order to ensure the viability of these courses, where appropriate these costs will be recovered from the learner.
- 4.11. Any courses which have additional fees for equipment, materials or uniform will be made clear to all learners prior to enrolment. In the event that learners are unable to afford these purchases financial support may be available from the

Bursary fund. Enquires related to financial support should be directed to the Learner Support team.

- 4.12. The costs of educational visits and trips will be recovered from the learners who choose to attend.

5. Funded Courses (excluding Apprenticeships) – Learners aged 19+

- 5.1. Learners aged 19+ on a funded course may be eligible for remission of their tuition and examination fees if they meet certain criteria as set out by the (ESFA).
- 5.2. Learners are usually required to have resided in the United Kingdom or European Economic Area (EEA) for the previous 3 years to be eligible for ESFA funding. There are exceptions to this rule which are set out in the ESFA common funding rules 2020/21. The College will assess a learner's eligibility prior to their enrolment on a course and any payment of fees.
- 5.3. Learners who are eligible for funding but are not entitled to remission of their fees will be co-funded by the organisation and a tuition fee will be charged. The tuition fee for part time courses will usually be 50% of the current un-weighted base funding rate as set by the ESFA.
- 5.4. Learners eligible for co-funding who are studying a full-time course will be charged an annual tuition fee.
- 5.5. Learners who provide satisfactory evidence of eligibility and are eligible for full remission of their fees will be fully-funded by the ESFA and no tuition fees will be charged.
- 5.6. A learner's full or co-funding status is assessed at the start of their course and remains the same for the duration of the course regardless of any change in circumstance.
- 5.7. The ESFA sets out the provision it will fully fund in its Adult Education Budget funding rules 2021/22. The table below shows where fee remission is available for learners.

Provision	19- to 23-year-olds	24+ unemployed	24+ other
English and maths, up to and including level 2 (Must be delivered as part of the legal entitlement)	Fully funded*	Fully funded*	Fully funded*
Level 2 (excluding English and maths) (First full level 2 must be delivered as part of the legal entitlement)	Fully funded* (first and full)	Fully Funded	Co-funded+
Learning to progress to level 2	Fully funded^ (up to and including level 1)	Fully funded	Co-funded+
Level 3 (First full level 3 must be delivered as part of the legal entitlement)	Fully funded* (first and full)	Loan-funded	Loan-funded
	Loan-funded** (previously achieved full level 3 or above)		
Traineeship#	Fully funded (including 16- to 24-year-olds**)	N/A	N/A
English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) learning up to and including level 2	Co-funded+	Fully funded	Co-funded+
	Fully funded – unemployed		
Learning aims up to and including level 2, where the learner has already achieved a first full level 2, or above	Co-funded+	Fully funded	Co-funded+
	Fully funded – unemployed		
Learning aims up to and including level 2, where the learner has not achieved a first full level 2, or above	N/A	Fully Funded	Co-funded+
<p>*Must be delivered as one of the English and maths, and/or first full level 2 or first full level 3 qualifications required as part of the legal entitlements.</p> <p>^Must be delivered as entry or level one provision from local flexibility.</p> <p># Excludes flexible element where funding depends on age and level.</p> <p>** 16- to 18-year-old learners must be eligible under the ESFA's young people's residency requirements.</p> <p>** Availability of loans at level 3 does not replace the legal entitlement to full funding for learners aged 19 to 23 undertaking their first full level 3.</p> <p>+ Low wage flexibility may apply, refer to paragraph 159.</p>			

- 5.8. The Adult Education Budget funding rules 2021/22 give further definitions on the categories used in the table above.
- 5.9. The ESFA no longer funds level 3 or above qualifications for learners aged 24 or over or for learners aged 19 or over if they already hold a level 3 or above qualification. For these learners there is now the possibility of accessing an Advanced Learning Loan. This is described in section 7 of this policy.
- 5.10. Some courses offered by the College may offer equipment, material or uniform to purchase for use within and outside of the college. In order to ensure the viability of these courses, where appropriate these costs will be recovered from the learner.
- 5.11. Any courses which have additional fees for equipment, material, uniform fees or DBS checks will be made clear to all learners prior to enrolment. In the event that learners are unable to afford these purchases financial support may be available from the Learner Support fund. Enquires related to financial support should be directed to the Learner Support team.
- 5.12. The costs of educational visits and trips will be recovered from the learners who choose to attend.

6. Apprenticeships

- 6.1. Prior to the commencement of an apprenticeship programme the College will enter into a contract with the apprentice's employer.
- 6.2. This contract will detail any fees and associated payment schedules that have been agreed between both parties.
- 6.3. Whilst indicative fees may be set for the apprenticeship frameworks and standards that the College offers, fees will be tailored for each agreement to take account of the possible variations in delivery requirements.
- 6.4. A separate policy is in place with sub-contractors.

7. Advanced Level Courses – Learners aged 19+

- 7.1. Any advanced level courses (level 3 or higher) for learners aged 24+ are not funded directly by the funding agencies. This is also the case for learners aged 19-23 who already hold an advanced level qualification.
- 7.2. For eligible advanced level courses learners have the opportunity to apply for an Advanced Learning Loan. More information can be found on the National Careers Service website.
- 7.3. If a learner chooses to pay their fees through an Advanced Learning Loan and then withdraws early from the course the Loan payments to the College will cease. The learner will remain liable to the Learner Loan Company for the loan amount paid to date. The College reserves the right to recover the balance of fees due.
- 7.4. If paying through an Advanced Learning Loan proof of a loan application must be supplied to the College prior to the commencement of the course. Where the learner have not been provided with the letter for the loan the learner will be given six weeks to secure the loan. The College reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a place on the course.
- 7.5. Some courses offered by the College may offer equipment, material or uniform to students for purchase for use within and outside of the college. In order to ensure the viability of these courses, where appropriate these costs will be recovered from the learner.
- 7.6. Any courses which have additional equipment, material or uniform fees will make these fees clear to all learners prior to enrolment. In the event that learners are unable to afford these purchases financial support may be available from the Advanced Loan Bursary fund. Enquires related to financial support should be directed to the Student Services, Engagement and funding.
- 7.7. The costs of educational visits and trips will be recovered from the learners who choose to attend.

8. Full Cost Commercial Courses

- 8.1. Full cost courses are run by the College with no support from government funding agencies. The fees set for these courses are not subject to the same opportunity for remission as funded courses.
- 8.2. Fees must be paid prior to the commencement of the course unless alternative formal arrangements have been agreed with the College. Examples of this may be a bespoke commercial course for an employer where it has been agreed to pay on receipt of an invoice.

9. International Learners

- 9.1. For fee purposes we classify learners as Home or International. This classification is predominantly based on residency and follows the funding agencies' regulations on eligible learners. You will usually be classified as an international learner if you reside in any country outside of the EU/EEA, unless you have been granted permission by the UK government to live in the UK, which is not for educational purposes, and have been ordinarily resident in the UK for at least the previous three years before the start of learning. The full definition is set out in the ESFA funding regulation.
- 9.2. The Home or International status of a learner will be assessed during the application and enrolment process. This assessment will include a confirmation of visa status if appropriate and all cases will be judged in accordance with government guidelines, a summary of these regulations is available from the UK Council for International Learner Affairs (UKCISA).
- 9.3. International fees will be assessed on an individual basis depending on the type and level of the course.

10. Financial Support

- 10.1. The College offers a range of bursaries and other financial support to its learners. Details of the support available and the eligibility requirements are available from the Student Services team.

11. Instalments

- 11.1. The College outsources its instalment payments to FlexPay. Courses less than 12 weeks duration are not eligible to be paid by instalments and must be paid in full prior to the commencement of the course. Learners wishing to pay via instalments should complete the relevant documents during the enrolment process.
- 11.2. Learners will be able to make monthly payments over the duration of their course. FlexPay will charge an administration fee of £6 per month. This fee is payable in full in advance. Further information can be found at <http://flexpay.uk.com/flexed/>. Learners who wish to pay in instalments must pay at enrolment the first 10% of the full cost of the course; this amount is non-refundable.

For example, if the learner spreads the remaining cost of a course over 6 months the administration fee payable to FlexPay is £36, payable in advance with the first monthly instalment, after which five further payments will need to be made to FlexPay.

If a learner fails to make a payment to FlexPay the debt will be recovered via their debt collection department, Oriel, on behalf of South Essex College.

- 11.3. A learner who withdraws after the start of their course will be given 2 weeks cooling off period and then will be liable for any remaining balance in full.

12. Employer payments

- 12.1. Where a learner is sponsored by an Employer for their course and the employer requires an invoice, written acceptance of responsibility is required This can be:
 - a) an email to S2C@essexsharedservices.co.uk stating the name of the learner(s) being sponsored and the period of the sponsorship
 - b) a purchase order submitted at enrolment
 - c) a letter from the employer submitted at enrolment.
- 12.2. In the event that a learner's fees are to be paid by an employer, once any of the above acceptance of responsibility has been received the employer remains ultimately liable for the course fees.
- 12.3. For courses of under 12 weeks in duration invoicing after the start date of the course will not be available and all fees must be paid in full prior to the start of the course.

13. Non-payment of fees

- 13.1. A learner's continued place on a course is dependent upon the payment of fees.
- 13.2. Any learners with outstanding fees due to the College will not be allowed to enrol onto any further courses until the debt/outstanding fees have been paid in full.
- 13.3. Unpaid fees will be referred to a debt collection agency (Oriel) for recovery.

14. Payment Incentives

- 14.1. A 10% discount of the tuition fee will be given for courses of 24 weeks or more (excluding Apprenticeships and Higher Education courses) where the full year's fees are paid during enrolment, in advance of the start date.

15. Refunds

- 15.1. In the event that the College closes a course or class a full refund will be made.
- 15.2. Refunds will usually be made by BACS.
- 15.3. Under normal circumstances, no refund shall be paid if a learner withdraws from a course for personal reasons after the commencement date of the course. All outstanding fees become due immediately upon withdrawal. In exceptional circumstances a partial refund may be granted at the discretion of the Senior Leadership Team.
- 15.4. College membership fees, equipment, material or uniform fees are non-refundable.

- 15.5. Refunds are subject to an administration charge. The amount for 2021/22 is 10% of the course fee.

16. Transfers

- 16.1. The following rules will be applied in the event of a learner transferring between courses at the College:
- 16.1.1. If a learner transfers from a course to a course with similar fees no additional fees will be charged.
 - 16.1.2. If a learner transfers to a course with a higher fee the learner will pay the difference between the new and old course.
 - 16.1.3. Where a learner decides to transfer to a course with a lower fee a partial refund will be paid.

17. How fees are set

- 17.1. For funded courses, tuition fees will be set in line with the expectation of the funding agency (ESFA) of a 50% contribution from the learner / sponsor. Managers of curriculum areas may adjust these fees, with approval from the Vice Principal Curriculum & Quality , to take account of local market information.
- 17.2. For learners who are funding their learning through the advanced Learning Loans the fees will be usually set at 100% of the ESFA's published maximum loan value. Managers of curriculum areas may adjust these fees with the approval of the Deputy Principal Curriculum, to take account of local market information.
- 17.3. For non-funded provision that is offered as full cost commercial courses the fee will be set at a level which reflects the content of the course taking into account local market conditions and the financial viability of the course.
- 17.4. For Higher Education courses fees will be set in line with the Access Agreement 2021/22.

Continuing learners will be subject to the South Essex College fee arrangements for their year of entry.

17.5 International Fees

- 17.5.1 In Country delivery fees are set by negotiation with the College or provider.
- 17.5.2 Fees for International Students studying in the UK are based upon the costs of delivery plus a negotiation with the home provider and broker where relevant.