

FIN02 - Fees Policy 2021-22

Policy Author:	VP Finance & HR	Policy Owner:	VP Finance & HR
Approval Date:	September 2021	Review Date:	September 2022

Purpose of the Policy

Weymouth College is committed to a fair and transparent policy in respect of charges made to learners.

- We believe that it is in the interests of the learner, and where applicable, the learner's sponsor(s) (an organisation or employer who is funding the learner) and the College, that learners receive prompt notification of any fees or charges due to us, along with the arrangements for payment. Learners are responsible for prompt payment.
- Learners retain ultimate responsibility for the payment of their fees, even where they have a sponsorship agreement.
- This fees policy does not apply to commercial or contract work, which is separately negotiated.
- Types of fee included in this policy are:
 - Further Education courses (including Advanced Learner Loans);
 - Higher Education courses (including Higher Education Student Loans);
 - Apprenticeships;
 - International learners; and
 - Adult Community Learning.
- Course fees cover the whole duration of the course. A programme is made up of any number of courses or qualifications spread over a period of time and each course or qualification may have fees associated with it.
- The College may at its discretion vary fees and charges in line with market conditions, government policy and guidance, and special initiatives. Variations must be authorised by the Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) or Vice Principal (Funding, Systems Development and Operations).

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1. Policy Objectives

- 1.1. Learning providers are given discretion to determine their tuition and other fee charges, with certain limitations set by the Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and the Office for Students (OfS).
- 1.2. The College charges a College Fee to all adults on full cost or government sponsored courses.
- 1.3. The College reserves the right to charge premium fees on individual programmes where market demand and/or cost justify; and similarly to reduce/waive fees in exceptional circumstances.
- 1.4. Where applicable, Examination, Registration & Certification and other fees will be charged in advance at the time a learner enrolls. These will not normally be refundable.
- 1.5. Other charges may apply to individual courses and will be identified separately. These will not normally be refundable. This includes resit fees, and fees to cover the cost of additional learning support beyond that reasonably provided in learning, where no government funding is available; such as on full cost courses.
- 1.6. Course fees and examination fees are not chargeable to 16 – 18 year old full time or part time learners as defined in the Education Funding Agency (EFA) Funding Guidance and in line with their guidance. Similarly, no course fees will be charged for learners with learning difficulties or disabilities aged 19 to 24 with a current Education, Health and Care Plan, where they are funded by the ESFA.
- 1.7. In line with EFA funding guidance, it is intended that learners should continue to receive free tuition in any consecutive subsequent year of study on the same study programme as recorded in their learning agreement
- 1.8. Learners are liable for the full payment of fees until formal confirmation of alternative arrangements is presented to the College.
- 1.9. The College reserves the right to exclude/suspend any learner who fails to pay their tuition and other fees, or make satisfactory arrangement to pay on, or by a set period after the start date of their course. The College also reserves the right to not accept enrolment onto another course within the year or in the future if there are outstanding fees.

2. Policy

Fee Remission

- 2.1. The ESFA recognises the importance of skills for gaining employment and for increasing the productivity of adults and will subsidise certain course fees enabling the College to offer fee remission for certain learners according to the ESFA eligibility criteria.
- 2.2. The priority groups that are currently eligible for ESFA subsidies include those unemployed on active benefits; those employed or self-employed, enrolling on an eligible course up to and including Level 2, and earning less than £17,374.50p annual gross salary; and those requiring adult Basic Skills (literacy and numeracy) or GCSE English or Maths at grade 4 or above; and those without Full Level 2 or 3 qualifications. Age restrictions also apply to these categories.

- 2.3. The eligibility criteria change each year and details of any changes will be communicated to learners through the College marketing materials, including website and through College support staff.
- 2.4. Learners will be required to provide evidence of their eligibility for fee remission (dated within 3 months before the course start date) and/or complete self-declarations as required at the time of enrolment.
- 2.5. In some circumstances, the College may offer qualifications that would be eligible for grant or loan funding but do not claim this, instead charging a commercial full-cost fee. Other providers may offer alternative funding routes for the same qualification.

Higher Education Learners

- 2.6. Higher Education (HE) refers to courses at Level 4 or above, which are designated as proscribed by the Office for Students (OfS). For the purposes of this document this is Higher National Certificates (HNC) and Diplomas (HND), Foundation Degrees (FdA/FdSc) and Diploma in Education and Training (DET)

Payment

- 2.7. A learner will not be able to enrol without:
 - paying the full fee up front, or;
 - demonstrating evidence of application to Student Finance England for a tuition fee loan for the full amount of the fees, or;
 - demonstrating evidence of application to the Student Finance England for a tuition fee loan for part of the fees and payment of the balance in full or by entering into a Direct Debit arrangement with us, or;
 - paying a deposit and entering into a Direct Debit arrangement with us for the balance.
- 2.8. Learners who elect not to take a loan will be required either to pay their fees in full prior to enrolment or enter into a Direct Debit agreement with the College.
- 2.9. Fees may be paid by credit or debit card, bank transfer, or cash. Instalment payments may only be made by setting up a Direct Debit agreement. Fees may be paid in person via the College Reception or credit / debit card over the phone through Finance Office.
- 2.10. Any learner having problems paying their fees should contact the Student Fees and Loans Officer.

Learners who arrange a loan via Student Finance England (SFE)

- 2.11. Student Finance England (SFE) operates independently of the College, and payment or non-payment of loans by SFE to the College shall not be taken to guarantee compliance with the College's rules regarding fees or in any way to affect the learner's liability to the College for fees.
- 2.12. SFE's policy regarding payment of loans is independent of the policy operated by the College.
- 2.13. Learners retain responsibility for the payment of their fees and all other monies owing to the College, regardless of any loan via SFE or sponsorship arrangements.

- 2.14.** Any monies owed by the learner to Student Finance England are separate to the learner's fee liability to the College.
- 2.15.** HE learners who do not have evidence of a learner loan after 4 weeks from the start date of their course will be required to set up a Direct Debit and start paying their tuition fees in instalments. Once their loan has been approved any monies due back to them will be refunded into the bank account on the Direct Debit mandate form. On production of evidence of a learner loan, the instalment plan will be cancelled and any monies due back to the learner will be refunded.
- 2.16.** HE learners have the option to pay their fees in instalments by Direct Debit. These may be paid in three instalments (40% on enrolment followed by two instalments of 30% due on 1st January and 1st April), or by 3 consecutive monthly instalments also due on 1st of each month.

HE Learners Period of Liability

- 2.17.** Any HE learner who withdraws or interrupts their studies during the academic year will be liable for the following tuition fees. This is based on guidance from Student Finance England and The Education (Learner Fees, Awards and Support) (Amendment) Regulations 2011:

Date	Fees Payable
From the point of enrolment up to the end of teaching in week 1, term 1.	0% annual fee
Term 1: From the beginning of Teaching in week 2 of Term 1, up to and including the First day of Teaching in Week 1, Term 2	25% annual fee
Term 2: From the Second day of Teaching in Week 1, Term 2 up to and including the first day of Teaching in Week 1, Term 3	50% annual fee
Term 3: From the second day of Teaching in Week 1, Term 3	100% annual fee

- 2.18.** Any learner withdrawn due to non-payment of tuition fees will be liable as detailed above.
- 2.19.** Liability for fees for HE Learners transferring to Weymouth College from other establishments will be determined on an individual basis.

Apprenticeships & Traineeships

- 2.20.** Apprenticeships refer to learners studying an approved apprenticeship in the form of a framework or a standard. This includes Higher and Degree Apprenticeships.
- 2.21.** Traineeships refer to an approved traineeship of 6 months or less, to be defined by an employer.

Fee Level:

- 2.22.** Apprenticeships – the ESFA expect that fees should be charged to employers in respect of their contribution towards the cost of supporting apprenticeships and the College will comply with the compulsory elements of the ESFA funding guidance and rules. This contribution is called co-investment.

- 2.23.** For Apprentices who started on or after 1 May 2017, the amounts chargeable will remain as per the negotiated fees agreed at the start of the apprenticeship with individual Employers.
- 2.24.** The ESFA has an expectation that those employers who are required to pay fees directly to the College will make the contribution required. The commitment to the fee is stated in the Apprenticeship agreement with the College.
- 2.25.** Where the employer fails to meet this obligation, the College will cease to receive any funding for the Apprentice and therefore reserves the right to terminate the Apprenticeship.
- 2.26.** Levy paying employers will meet the costs of the apprenticeship through their levy account, assuming that sufficient funds are available in the account to meet the costs of the fees. The funds are paid to the College via the ESFA.
- 2.27.** Where a levy-paying employer has insufficient funds in their levy account to meet the costs of the fees, the employer is required to pay the costs directly to the College. Paragraph d. above applies.
- 2.28.** The College reserves the right to vary any fee levels to enable it to respond to exceptional circumstances, individually negotiated contract opportunities, or market conditions.
- 2.29.** There are no fees charged for Traineeships.

Apprenticeships & Traineeships Period of Liability:

- 2.30.** The employer liability for future contributions ceases if the apprentice leaves their organisation. No refund of contributions up to the point of leaving will be made.

International Learners

- 2.31.** An international learner is defined as a non-EU/non-EEA national who has no residency status in the European Union; in-line with UK Border Agency guidance.

Fee Level:

- 2.32.** Where learners are not eligible for ESFA/EFA grant funding, the following learner rates will be charged:

International Visa Holders

A levels	£5,500 per year		
Btec	£5,500 per year		
HNC/HND	£6,000 per year	Tuition £5,750	Administration £250
Fd Degree	£6,800 per year	Tuition £6,550	Administration £250

UKVI Maintenance requires: that you must have evidence that you have £9,207 to be in your bank as evidence to meet your maintenance requirements.

EU, EEA & Swiss Nationals Visa Holders

For this year

£3,600 per year

UKVI Maintenance requires: that you are able to show if asked that you have £9,207 to maintain yourself, but you do not have to show this evidence when applying for your visa unless asked

Students on Short Term Courses

£1,200	per term
£400	4 weeks
£800	8 Weeks
£1,200	12 weeks
£2,000	20 Weeks

Payment Method:

2.33. A non-refundable administration fee of £250 will be required prior to issue of Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (tier 4).

2.34. International learners are not entitled to pay by instalments.

2.35. No bursaries are available for international learners.

International Learners Period of Liability:

2.36. All fees and charges are payable in advance and are not refundable.

Under 16 Learners

2.37. Under 16 learners refer to learners who commence their studies in September, who are under the age of 16 at the start of the academic year.

Fee Level:

2.38. Individual learners under the age of 16 for whom no ESFA approval for funding has been given and who seek to enrol on a College course will normally require a letter of support from their school or educational psychologist. The school (i.e. the LEA for maintained schools) or parents will be required to pay a fee based upon the income that the College would have received from the ESFA.

2.39. The standard fee for a learner undertaking a normal programme will be based on the ESFA funding formula. Any additional costs which may be incurred over and above a normal programme will be charged in addition to this basic fee rate.

Advanced Learner Loans

2.40. Advanced Learner Loans refer to learning loans for learners aged 19 and over for study on eligible level 3, 4, 5 or 6 qualifications, excluding Advanced and Higher Apprenticeships and Higher Education. The College will comply with the compulsory aspects of the Funding Rules documents relating to Advanced Learner Loans.

Fee Level:

2.41. Tuition fees will vary depending on the course. The course fee will be publicised before the commencement of the course or notified to the learner on the enrolment form or offer letter.

2.42. The loan can cover all costs and charges for items which a learner cannot complete the course without. Any additional costs which may be incurred over and above the loan value will be charged in addition to the loan value.

Payment Method:

- 2.43.** Learners must apply to the Student Loans Company (SLC) for the Advanced Learner Loan. The Student Loans Company is responsible for assessing whether learners are eligible for a loan and for administering repayments.
- 2.44.** The College recommends that individuals consider their own financial circumstances before applying for a loan and consider all the options available. Free independent financial advice is available from The Money Advice Service at moneyadviceservice.org.uk
- 2.45.** If a learner's loan is not approved after 4 weeks, the learner will be required to set up a Direct Debit and start paying their fees in instalments. If their loan is approved at a later date, any monies due back to the learner will be refunded back into the account details on the Direct Debit mandate form.

Advanced Learner Loans Period of Liability:

- 2.46.** Learners should note that once they have attended the course, cancelling their loan with the Student Loan Company will not remove the requirement to pay fees. The balance will remain outstanding against the learner's enrolment record until payment of all fees due has been received.
- 2.47.** Learners will be liable for the full SLC loan amount taken out or full level of loan taken up until the point of formal withdrawal from the associated qualification regardless of any other circumstances including, for example, outstanding or unresolved complaints or disputes.
- 2.48.** Learners who wish to transfer from one course to another, or take a break in learning must seek advice from the Student Fees and Loans Officer to understand the possible implications before making a decision.

Support with Costs:

- 2.49.** Limited discretionary funds for Further Education are made available from the Government to support learners enrolled on funded courses and contribute towards costs as determined by the College Learner Support Fund criteria. Examples of costs that may be eligible for support are:
- Exam and/or registration fees
 - Tuition
 - Essential kit and equipment
 - Books
 - Travel
- 2.50.** Full-time and part-time learners required to pay fees but who are eligible for support from the Learner Support Fund will be required to contribute at least 30% towards the cost of exam/registration fees.
- 2.51.** Eligibility for support towards costs will be determined on the basis of applicant income, identified need and availability of funds.
- 2.52.** Childcare: Support may be available towards meeting the cost of OFSTED registered childcare up to a ceiling determined by the College. Any learners under 20 will be funded by Care to Learn for childcare costs.
- 2.53.** For any learners requesting support with fees, Student Services will be able to offer advice as to possible routes.

Sponsors

- 2.54.** Learners may ask the College to invoice external sponsors, such as employers or other third parties. Learners must provide, at or before the time of enrolment, evidence to confirm the amount or proportion of the fees and charges being paid by the sponsor.
- 2.55.** In the event that evidence from a sponsor is provided at a later date, then any amount which has been paid by the learner will be refunded to the extent that the fees/charges are to be paid by the sponsor.
- 2.56.** It is the learner's personal responsibility to ensure that fees and charges are paid on time. This is the case irrespective of whether fees are being paid by a sponsor (including the Student Loans Company).
- 2.57.** Sponsors are liable for all fees up to the point of a student withdrawing, regardless of the reason for withdrawal.
- 2.58.** If the sponsor does not pay for whatever reason, the responsibility for payment of any outstanding fees or charges falls to the learner.

Refunds

- 2.59.** If the College cancels a course it will refund the full fees paid by the learner.
- 2.60.** Individual staff at the College are not permitted to waive fees or authorise refunds. This can only be authorised by the Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality) or the Vice Principal (Funding, Systems Development and Operations).
- 2.61.** If a learner withdraws from a course before the start date of the course the learner will be entitled to a refund of tuition and exam fees, providing they have informed the Enrolments Team at least 2 weeks before the course start date. An administration fee of £10 will be retained.
- 2.62.** If a learner withdraws from the course after the course start date or does not attend the course they have enrolled on there will be no refund of payments made (including tuition, material, registration and exam fees) unless the learner has withdrawn due to their own serious medical condition (medical certificate required as evidence), and then a proportionate refund of tuition fees may be made (based on the proportion of the course attended), on application to the Vice Principal (Curriculum & Quality). The application will be acknowledged and considered using information collated from interested parties.
- 2.63.** In the event of a refund being authorised, exam fees will only be refunded if they have not already been paid on to the relevant Examinations Board.
- 2.64.** The administration fee for paying fees by instalments of £20 is non-refundable.
- 2.65.** Where a "College Fee" has been applied, this is non-refundable.
- 2.66.** Refund applications will only be considered within the relevant academic year and tuition fees will not be reduced to learners who start their courses late.
- 2.67.** Refunds will normally be paid by the same method as original payment within 28 days of authorisation of refund.

Payment Options

- 2.68.** All fees are payable on enrolment. However, to assist learners who would otherwise suffer financial hardship in paying their fees in one sum, approval may be given to pay fees in instalments by Direct Debit. A learner's previous payment history may be taken into account when deciding approval.
- 2.69.** The method of payment for instalments will be by Direct Debit, except at the time of enrolment when the first payment is due.
- 2.70.** Payment options are not available to international learners, employers (except for apprenticeship fees), courses of less than 12 weeks duration and any full cost leisure courses or for amounts owed under £150.
- 2.71.** There is a £20 non-refundable administration fee for learners wishing to pay by instalments.
- 2.72.** If approved, a Direct Debit form must be signed at the time of Enrolment.
- 2.73.** Direct Debit payments will be taken on or just after the 1st of each calendar month. Where fees are £150 or more and instalments are approved, the total fee will be payable in three instalments (40% then two instalments of 30%), the first payable on enrolment and the remainder by Direct Debit.
- 2.74.** Direct Debit payments will be taken from September of the academic year of study onwards.
- 2.75.** All instalment plans starting at the beginning of the academic year must end by 31st May of the same academic year, or the end date of the course, whichever is the sooner. For short courses, the last instalment is due before the end date of the course.
- 2.76.** If a learner cancels or fails to honour their Direct Debit, all outstanding fees will become immediately payable in full.
- 2.77.** Where there are insufficient funds in the payers bank/building society account to cover the cost of a Direct Debit instalment, the learner will incur charges from their bank/building society. Any such charges are the learner's responsibility and will not be refunded by the College.

Non Payment of Fees & Charges

- 2.78.** Learners retain ultimate responsibility for the payment of their fees and any other charges owed to the College, regardless of arrangements with third parties such as SFE/SLC, employers or other sponsors. If a third party is paying amounts on behalf of the learner, the learner must ensure that these payments are duly made.
- 2.79.** The College will pursue all unpaid fees and charges, and this could result in the following action being taken:
- Withdrawal of library borrowing rights;
 - Withdrawal of IT rights/access;
 - Suspension or withdrawal from a course/study programme;
 - Awards may be withheld and/or graduation deferred;

- Referral of debt to an external debt collection agency; or
- Legal action through the courts which may affect a person's credit rating.

2.80. If a learner is suspended or withdrawn from a course for non-payment, they will remain liable for all fees and charges.

2.81. Learners will not be permitted to enrol on any further courses if there are outstanding fees or charges.

2.82. Learners are encouraged to advise the College as soon as possible if they believe that they have problems meeting their fee obligations. Additional costs incurred in pursuing missed payments, including direct debit payments, may be passed onto the learner or sponsor.

3. Complaints and Compensation

Non-payment of fees cannot be used as a method of initiating a complaint about the College or course. All complaints must be dealt with using the College's Complaints Policy.

Higher Education students please refer to the HE Compensation and Refunds Policy.

Definitions:	None.	Who Needs to Know?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All College staff • Parents • Students • Sponsors
Related Policies and Procedures:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Contract • HE Student Contract • Complaints Policy • HE Compensation and Refunds Policy 	Approval Date:	September 2021
<p>This policy was approved and adopted by:</p> <p><i>Julia Howe</i></p> <p>Julia Howe Principal and Chief Executive Officer</p>			