



Document Title	<b>Tuition Fee Policy – Further Education 2022-23</b>
Author	Head of MIS
Approving Body	Corporation
Date	March 2022
Review Date	March 2023

## 1. PURPOSE

The purpose of the policy is to ensure that:

- i. Fees are levied appropriately and consistently across all divisions of United Colleges Group (UCG / College).
- ii. The College is operating in accordance with the requirements of its funding and monitoring bodies.
- iii. Students and other interested stakeholders such as parents and employers will be given clear information about fees and charges before the student has committed to the course.
- iv. The fees that the College charges are reviewed and set each year by the Senior Leadership Team, taking into consideration the requirements of government legislation and of the funding agencies.

## 2. SCOPE

The policy applies to all student-based activity at all divisions of United Colleges Group.

## 3. RESPONSIBILITY

The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for policy compliance and implementation.

## 4. POLICY STATEMENT

United Colleges Group course fees are set annually in accordance with the requirements of its funding and monitoring agencies. These include the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), the Greater London Authority (GLA), the Office for Students (OfS), Ofsted and auditors. The policy requirements apply to government/devolved authority funded FE provision

The College takes all reasonable steps to ensure that fee information released to the public is accurate, the College reserve the right to amend fees.

To support equality of opportunity the College will

- i. Provide information and assistance in applying for financial support for course fees.
- ii. Provide instalment payment options in cases of financial hardship.
- iii. Provide a range of student support services that include information and guidance on courses, progression, funding, fees, bursary funds and financial support.
- iv. Wherever possible, enable and facilitate students to access other funds available to contribute to the fees and charges of those students who would otherwise have difficulty in paying these costs

## 5. DEFINITIONS

### 5.1 HOME STUDENTS

The ESFA only fund Home Students. Home Students must meet the 3-year residency requirement. The student must have been legally and ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom for three continuous years.

From 1 August 2021, EU, other EEA and Swiss nationals and their family members who are not covered by the Withdrawal Agreements will no longer be eligible for home fee status, undergraduate and postgraduate financial support and advanced learner loans unless the student can evidence their [settled or pre-settled status](#), lived in the UK prior to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2020 and have three continuous years residency in UK, EU or EEA and have settled or pre-settled status.

Students normally resident in Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales are not ordinarily funded as the devolved nations have their own funding rules, in these circumstances the College will attempt to gain permission for funding from the relevant funding agency.

Where fees are to be set for FE provision, they will be based upon funding rates where available and include registration, tuition, and examination fees. Exceptions may be provided for some professional courses (where a FALA rate does not exist) and those negotiated with employers, any exceptions to fee levels must be approved by the Head of Finance or a Strategic Leadership Team member before being agreed.

Any fee reductions for any other purposes must be agreed in advance of a course starting, where a fee reduction has not been approved by UCG, the Student will be liable for the full fee as per the terms stated in this agreement.

## **5.2 FULLY FUNDED**

Home Students can be fully funded (pay no tuition or examination fees) if both their personal status and their chosen course meet the qualifying criteria for fee remission. These criteria include the student's funding status, their age, their prior attainment(s), their benefits status and receipt of benefits, and the level and type of their course and the funding availability of their chosen course on the government '[Find a learning aim](#)'. The personal status criteria are detailed in section 6.

## **5.3 CO-FUNDED**

Some Home Students, dependent on age, prior attainment, benefits status, and course, will be charged fees. These may include elements for tuition, exam costs, materials and trips. The tuition fee will be approximately 50% of the un-weighted funding value of the qualification studied or calculated according to the agreed hourly rate. These students are referred to as 'co-funded', the ESFA / GLA pays the college the remainder of the full funding value. The co-funding criteria are detailed in section 7.

## **5.4 UNFUNDED HOME STUDENTS**

Home Students on full cost recovery costs or adults whose prior attainment means they do not meet the criteria for ESFA / GLA support will need to pay the full fee required for the course, with no fee remission.

## **5.5 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

An international student is a one who does not qualify as a Home Student. International students are charged fees at a higher rate to reflect the full cost of their individual learning programme. The College does not ordinarily recruit International students to its courses or programmes, including Higher Education as UCG does not have a [Tier 4 license](#) in place.

## **6. FULLY FUNDED STUDENTS**

The following categories of students (some require the student be resident in the Greater London Authority area) undertaking classroom based Further Education (FE) learning will be entitled to full funding of their tuition fees, subject to satisfactory evidence of status and/or income being provided at the point of enrolment:

- 16–18 Students who are eligible for funding
- Student aged 19 who is continuing a qualification they started when they were aged 16 to 18
- Students aged 19 to 24 who have an active, approved Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) with their Local Authority
- Unemployed adults in the following categories:
  - In receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), including those receiving National

- Insurance credits only
    - In receipt of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
    - Receive Universal Credit, and their take-home pay as recorded on their Universal Credit statement (disregarding Universal Credit payments and other 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)
- Other adults who:
  - receives other state benefits (not listed in paragraph 120) and their take-home pay (disregarding Universal Credit payments and other 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), **and**;
    - wants to be employed, or progress into more sustainable employment, and their take-home pay (disregarding Universal Credit payments and other 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), and the College are satisfied identified learning is directly relevant to their employment prospects and the local labour market needs.
- First Full Level 2 qualification for students aged 19 up to 23 (if the qualification appears in the [‘Legal Entitlements’](#) list), ‘Full level 2’ is defined in the ‘Adult education budget: funding rules’.
- First Full Level 3 qualification for students aged 19 up to 23 (if the qualification appears in the [‘Legal Entitlements’](#) list), ‘Full level 3’ is defined in the ‘Adult education budget: funding rules’.
- Free Courses for Jobs offer- Any adult in England aged 19 or over on the start date of their qualification accessing a qualification on the [level 3 adult offer qualifications list](#) and earning under the National Living Wage or is unemployed, will also be able to access these qualifications for free, regardless of their prior qualification level.
- Foundation learning for adults aged 19 up to 24 with no prior level 2 qualification
- Accredited English and Maths provision for all adults up to and including level 2, who have not previously attained a GCSE grade A\* - C or grade 4, or higher.
- Aged 19 or over on the start date of their vocational qualification at Level 3, where the qualification is designated as London Recovery Flexibilities from the GLA and the learner is unemployed (defined above); or in receipt of a low wage (defined below) and enrolled on a vocational qualification of no longer than 12 months that supports an individual to regain work or employment stability (academic qualifications are not included in this offer).
- Students in receipt of a low wage who:
  - are employed and cannot contribute towards the cost of co-funding fees
  - are eligible for co-funding, and
    - Earn less than £17,374.50 (equivalent to £8.91 per hour) annual gross salary if they are a resident out of the Greater London Authority area.
    - Earn less than the real living wage of £21,547.50 (equivalent to £11.05 per hour) annual gross salary if they reside within the Greater London Authority area.
- Digital Skills for those aged 19 and over – including individuals who are employed, aged 19 or older, assessed at below level 1, as part of their legal entitlement on the day they start a qualification designated as [‘Digital Entitlement’](#)
- Learners funded through Sector Work Academy Programmes (SWAPs)
- An asylum seeker who can evidence their asylum claim, live in the Greater London Authority area, and have lived in the UK for more than 6 months and are enrolling to FE fundable provision.
- Students who are continuing the same learning aim which they enrolled to in 2020/21 shall continue to be entitled to the same remission conditions that were operational at the time of the commencement of their study on that learning aim.

## 7. CO-FUNDED STUDENTS

The following categories of students will be charged a tuition fee approximately equal to 50% of the un-weighted ESFA funding rate for the learning aims they intend to study or calculated according to the agreed hourly rate. They will also be charged fees at enrolment to fully cover the costs of examinations, course materials or mandatory trips. Additional costs may also apply for professional registration, non-mandatory trips, or equipment etc

- Home Students over 18 years of age, studying ESFA/GLA funded learning aims below Level 3, who do not meet any of the fully funded criteria in section 6.
- Students who are continuing the same learning aim which they enrolled to in 2020/21 will continue to be entitled to the same remission conditions that were operational at the time of the commencement of their study on that learning aim.

## **8. ADVANCED LEARNER LOAN FUNDED STUDENTS**

Home Students aged over 18 on 31<sup>st</sup> August in the year the qualification started and studying ESFA/GLA funded learning aims at Level 3 or 4 will be unfunded (unless a fee remission identified in section 6 applies) and charged a tuition fee equal to 100% of the weighted ESFA funding rate for the learning aim they intend to study. These students will not be charged examination fees.

- Students in this category can either self-fund or apply for an [Advanced Learning Loan](#) to pay the cost of their tuition.
- Students will only be eligible to receive a loan that is either equal to, or less than the funding rate for the course. The minimum amount the student can apply for is £300.
- Loans are not means tested and will be available to eligible learners aged over 18 studying in England on approved qualifications based on the decision from the [Student Loan Company](#).
- Should a student loan application be declined, incomplete or ineligible the student is liable for the full fees of the course.
- Should a student withdraw from the course during any period of the academic year they will be liable for the fees up to the end of the term in which they withdraw from the course.
- Students are responsible for ensuring that tuition fee loan support is arranged in a timely manner.
- Students funding their course via a student loan will be asked to provide evidence that their Loan Funding is in place to confirm their registration on their course and will be required to complete a payment agreement to complete their registration/enrolment. The payment agreement will be used to collect unpaid tuition fees if funding is not in place by the start of the second term of the student's course.
- Students funding their learning through Advanced Learner Loans should be aware that, if they cease to attend their course, amounts due in respect of tuition fees cease to be paid by Student Finance to the College on behalf of the student. If the student withdraws or does not resume attendance of their course within an acceptable period, the outstanding balance of tuition fees not paid by Student Finance will become immediately payable to the College by the student.
- Students not wishing to enter into a loan agreement will be liable for payment of the relevant tuition fee, or any up-front fees not covered by loans pre-payable at the time of enrolment.

Students on multiple learning aims will have to meet the cost of funding any additional course studied that is not funded by the Advanced Learning Loan. Please note all other rules apply as outlined in section 7(i) above.

## **9. FULL COST PROVISION**

All full cost courses must have the authorisation of the relevant Vice or Deputy Principal. Course proposals must be costed by the budget holder and agreed with Finance before any

commitments are made. Provision must be made for charging both direct and indirect costs. Fees will be priced at a level to reflect the full cost to the College plus an agreed margin, which may be varied from time to time.

There is no fee remission, fee reduction or support for fees on full cost courses. All learners, regardless of age and home status, pay the full fee for the courses. In instances where an employer contracts the College to deliver full cost programmes, special fee arrangements may be made with the authorisation of the relevant Vice or Deputy Principal.

## **10. SCHOOL LINK AND SUBCONTRACTED STUDENTS**

School Link and subcontracted students will be admitted to courses at the discretion of the College where contracts have been agreed by the College and the external partner organisation. These students are not charged individually as the external partner will be invoiced directly.

## **11. DISCRETIONARY/ LEARNER SUPPORT FUNDS**

Home students who are unable to meet the full costs of tuition fees and/or other fees and meet specific eligibility criteria may be able to get assistance from the College Discretionary / Learner Support Funds. Students can access information from the Learner Support Team pre, during and after enrolment. The student will be required to provide evidence if a claim for financial assistance is made to the Learner Support Team.

## **12. EXAMINATION FEES**

Co-Funded and Full Cost students will, where applicable, be required to pay the appropriate examination or awarding body registration fees. This includes the payment for re-sits and early examination entries not endorsed by the College. Learners aged 16 to 18 may be charged re-sit fees at the discretion of the college.

*Note: The College will not generally consider requests for early entry or re-sit. However, where such requests are supported by the College (Functional Skills, GCSE Maths/English up to Level 2) the standard cost will be met in full by the College. Alternatively, where a re-sit or early/late entry request is independently requested by a student, this will be considered on an individual basis by Curriculum Management and the College reserves the right to refuse any such requests. Where independent requests are approved, the associated cost will be met in full by the student. Please refer to the College Examination Re-sit Policy for further information.*

*The College does not ordinarily accept exam registrations from students not enrolled on the course at the College ("external candidates").*

## **13. PAYMENT OF FEES**

### **13.1 HOME STUDENTS**

Students are expected to pay for their fees in full before the commencement of their course. The College permits some fees to be paid by instalments. Students, upon request, will be given information regarding acceptable payment methods and instalment options as part of their enrolment instructions.

Instalment plans will generally only be available where a course exceeds 20 weeks' in length and where the total course fee exceeds £500. Exceptions to this lower limit are at the discretion of Finance, informed by Student Support Services. Any administration costs, if applicable, will be included when setting up an individual payment plan. Payment plans will consist of a maximum of three instalments, with payment of the first instalment due at enrolment, the second by the end of November and the third, where applicable, by the end of February. For courses starting later than September, the specified months for payment will be agreed with the learner.

## **13.2 EMPLOYER SPONSORED STUDENTS**

Employer sponsored students should ensure they obtain and hand to the College either a purchase order or a letter from their employer confirming they will cover the course fees. The College will raise an invoice for the full fee to the employer either at the point of enrolment or shortly thereafter. Standard credit terms of 30 days from date of invoice will apply to all College invoices raised to employers. Students will become liable for any fees unpaid by their employer.

## **14. REFUND OF FEES**

### **14.1 REASONS WHERE REFUNDS MAY BE CONSIDERED**

The College has a general policy of making no refunds other than in cases where action taken by the College results in a student being unable to take up a place on the course; e.g.

- The course is cancelled by the College.
- The dates of the course are changed, and the student can no longer attend.
- The student withdraws prior to the commencement of the course due to exceptional circumstances beyond their control.

### **14.2 EXCEPTIONAL CIRCUMSTANCES WHERE FEES MAY BE REFUNDED AT COLLEGE DISCRETION**

- Where a student transfers from one course to another, the difference in course fees will be refunded or, should any additional charges apply, the student will be required to pay the difference.
- Where an additional fee has been paid at enrolment for materials, visits etc. the fees may be refunded if approved by the appropriate Assistant Principal. The refunded amount will reflect the period attended and or materials used to date.

### **14.3 REFUND OF FEES - INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

- The College does not accept International students to FE courses.

## **15. FAILURE TO PAY**

If a student is having problems paying tuition fees or any other monies owing, it is essential that the student contacts the Finance office as soon as possible to discuss any potential alternatives.

The College will take reasonable steps to advise and support students in financial difficulty, students retain ultimate responsibility for the payment of their fees and all other monies owing to the College regardless of sponsorship agreements or student loan funding arrangements, including where sponsored by an employer.

After support measures have been considered and applied, failure to pay agreed monies in line with any agreed arrangements will, in most cases, ultimately result in suspension or withdrawal from the course and the referral of the debt to the College's debt recovery agency.

Should payment of outstanding fees be made within a reasonable timescale, and providing that the student has not missed any substantial or critical element of the course they may be permitted to resume studies.

Students with outstanding academic fee debt may, until all outstanding monies have been paid:

- Not be permitted to register for new courses or to continue their course

- Not be entered for assessment or examinations pertaining to the course.
- Not be issued with any academic references





Document Title	Higher Education Tuition Fee Policy
Author	Head of MIS
Approving Body	Corporation
Date	March 2022
Review Date	March 2023

## 1. Policy Statement

The policy sets out the method for:

- Determining the fees for publicly-funded Higher Education courses and details the cost for both home and international students' programme of study.
- It incorporates the policy for instalments, refunds and additional course related charges for Higher Education provision.
- Students and sponsors will be notified, wherever possible, of fee levels as soon as possible and no later than by the offer stage.
- Tuition fee charges are reviewed on an annual basis.
- The College reserves the right to vary the fees without notice at any time up to the commencement of the course.

## 2. Scope of Policy

The Policy has been produced for the benefit of stakeholders such as potential applicants, current students, College Staff and Higher Education Agencies. The tuition fee policy, annual fee schedule, and any student related information will be publicised on the College website by May 2022 for the 2022-23 academic year (and to this pattern annually). In order to maintain this schedule of public information the College's HE and International fees and fee policy will be agreed by the Governing Body by April annually.

## 3. Linked External Codes/ Regulations

At the time of publication this policy is underpinned by the following regulations and policy guidance.

- The Department of Business, Innovation and Skills (DBIS) Memorandum: Support available under the Education (student support) Regulations for 2014/15.
- The Higher Education (Higher amount) England Regulations 2010
- The Higher Education (Basic amount) England Regulations 2010
- Higher Education Act 2004; sections 24 and 25.
- The Quality Assurance Agency (QAA), the Quality Code
- Strategy for Student Access and Success

## 4. Tuition Fee

### A) Home Students

For tuition fees purposes students who are considered as "home" students are eligible to apply for a Student Loan. A full definition of students who fall under this category can be found in Schedule 1 of the Education (Fees and Awards) England Regulations 2007 (SI 2007 No. 779)

- i. Tuition fee charges for students commencing a Higher Education Certificate/Diploma (HNC/HND), Foundation Degree or Undergraduate Degree course on a full or part-time basis are set at an individual course level.
- ii. The fee charges have been designed to ensure that all full-time undergraduate 'eligible' students will be able to meet the full cost of their fees by means of the government loans available from Student Finance England. Students will only need to start repaying the loans after they have left higher education and start earning above a certain threshold.
- iii. Fees for HE courses are charged annually for each year (or part year) of the course. Fees listed on enrolments and College websites are the fee for each year of the course.

## **B) International Students**

The fee charges for International students are higher than the fees set for UK/EU students. International students will be expected to pay their tuition fees in full before the start of the course. The College currently does not hold a Tier 4 license and does not accept International Students.

### **5. Equivalent Level Qualification (ELQ) Fees**

Where a student's highest qualification upon entry is the equivalent to or higher than the qualification they propose to study, the student will be charged the standard fee for the qualification or the Home (UK/EU) Non Exempt ELQ fee. Please note that a student loan is not generally available to fund the fees for such a course. However, students may consider applying for a Professional Career Development Loan (PCDL) to fund their programme of study.

### **6. Fees Funded by Student Loans**

Students applying for a higher education tuition fee loan will only be eligible for a loan that reflects the fees charged.

Students, who are not applying for a higher education tuition fee loan and are considered to be self-financing, will have to pay their tuition fee in full with an option to pay by instalment (see Section 9).

### **7. Fee Payment**

Fees are due on or before the commencement of each year of the course.

The College will generally invoice students or their sponsors for any outstanding fees due, however these are reminders only and students are contractually responsible for ensuring the timely payment of their fees. Any exceptional fee payment method must be approved by the Chief Financial Officer.

#### **7.1 Payment dates for Tuition Fee Loans**

Tuition fee loans will be paid by the Student Loan Company to the College in three instalments. This payment cycle will apply to all students irrespective of the tuition loan amount.

### **8. Other Charges**

#### **8.1 Re-Enrolment Fee**

Students re-enrolling to re-sit an assessment beyond the original period of enrolment for their designated programme of study will need to pay a re-enrolment and re-assessment fee which will be commensurate with the size of the remaining programme to be completed.

All fees to be paid in full prior to the assessment attempt.

#### **8.2 Professional Body Re-Sit Fees**

Students who have failed their professional body exam will be expected to meet the cost of any professional body re-sit fees. Please note this cost may vary depending on the individual professional body's fee charges.

#### **8.3 Replacement Results Transcripts/ Confirmation of Attendance Charges**

Replacement results transcripts or a confirmation of attendance letter can be provided on request. A fee of £30 will be charged to cover the associated administrative and postage costs, in addition to whatever the awarding body may charge for reprinting certification. Only in exceptional circumstances will the College consider waiving this charge.

## **9. Payment by Instalments**

The College will generally expect all students to pay their fees promptly at enrolment or have in place the necessary arrangements for the fees to be paid either by student loan or a sponsor. However in exceptional circumstances, some students may be permitted to pay fees by instalments. Students considering the instalment payment option, will be issued with this information as part of their joining instructions.

### **9.1 Home Students Payment by Instalments**

Instalment arrangements are individually negotiated but would normally be paid at the point of enrolment and subsequently in November and February.

9.2 There is no facility for international students to pay by instalments.

## **10. Non-Payment Sanctions**

The College reserves the right to impose sanctions against students for whom fees remain unpaid following a payment deadline. Such sanctions will include:

- Late payment surcharges
- Withdrawal of library lending facilities
- Removal of access to computing systems
- Denied access to class

## **11. Refund of Fees**

### **11.1 Reasons where Refunds may be considered**

The College has a policy of no refunds other than in cases where action taken by the College results in a student being unable to take up a place on the course.

Circumstances where a student may be entitled to a refund are as follows:

- The course is cancelled by the College.
- The student withdraws prior to the commencement of the course due to a change in circumstances beyond their control.

### **11.2 Other Exceptional Circumstances in which Fees may be refunded at the College's Discretion**

- Where a student transfers from one course to another, the difference in course fees will be refunded to the student or their sponsor or should any additional charges apply as a result of a transfer, the student or sponsor will be required to pay the difference.
- The student withdraws from the course due to mitigating circumstances, beyond their control, following a period of attendance, see section 11.3 and 11.4 below.

### **11.3 Arrangements for Refund of Tuition Fees in Exceptional Circumstances (Home Students)**

- If a student withdraws before the commencement of a course or within two weeks of the course start date a full refund will be given less an administration fee of £50.
- If a student withdraws at any other point during Semester one (up to end January annually), one third of the fees paid will be refunded less an administration fee of £50.
- If a student withdraws at any point in Semester two (up to the end of June annually) no fees will be refunded.

#### **11.4 Arrangements for Refund of Tuition Fees in Exceptional Circumstances (International Students)**

- If a student visa has been refused a full refund will be given less an administration charge of £100.
- If a student withdraws before the commencement of a course or within two weeks of the course start date a full refund will be given less an administration fee of £100.
- If a student withdraws at any other point during semester one (up to end January annually), one third of the fees paid will be refunded less an administration fee of £100.
- If a student withdraws at any point in Semester two (up to the end of June annually) no fees will be refunded.

#### **12. Failure to Pay**

The College will take reasonable steps to give advice and support students in financial difficulty. Any student who is in financial difficulty should seek advice from the Student Advice staff at the earliest opportunity.

Failure to pay the agreed tuition fees or by the agreed instalment plan may result in suspension or withdrawal from the course.