



Northern College

1. Overview

Policy Title	Fees Policy 2023/24
Who does the policy apply to?	This is a corporate policy which sets out the framework that the College will apply in relation to fees. It should be read by any student applying for a course at the College and by all governors and staff.
Aims	To set out and communicate the regulations and fees charged for courses and services at the College.
To be read in conjunction with	Fees listed on the College website Financial Support Policy 2023/24 Financial Regulations
Further advice may be sought from	Head of Finance
Review arrangements	<p>This policy will be reviewed annually to ensure its continuing relevance and effectiveness.</p> <p>The College may review the policy prior to this date should operational and/or legislative/guidance matters require it.</p> <p>Further details regarding revisions and review cycle can be found at Sections 6 and 7.</p>

2 Introduction

2.1 Purpose and Objectives

- 2.1.1 The fees policy ('the policy') sets out the pricing structure for the academic year 2023-2024 and covers all College course costs, fees and charges. The course costs within the policy are the minimum charges for business/curriculum planning purposes for 2023-2024 and will be adopted for courses and activities from 1st August 2023 onwards.
- 2.1.2 The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), South Yorkshire Mayoral Combined Authority (SYMCA) and West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA) require Colleges to collect a fee element to complement public funding for further education courses. In 2023-24 the percentage assumed fee element will remain at 50% for co-funded adult provision.
- 2.1.3 The College fees policy covers further education, higher education and all other costs and fees such as facilities hire and associated residential charges. It also outlines the College's policy with regard to the collection of course costs, instalment payments, refunds and eligibility for fee waivers and remission.

2.2 Key Responsibilities

The following groups have responsibilities relating to this policy:

- 2.2.1 **The Governors** have responsibility for the solvency of the College and the safeguarding of its assets; to secure the efficient, economical and effective management of all the College's resources and expenditure, capital assets, equipment and staff, so that investment of public funds in the College is not put at risk; to determine tuition and other course costs payable to the College by students.
- 2.2.2 **The Principal** has financial responsibility as chief accounting officer and of the management of resources within budgets approved by the board.
- 2.2.3 **The Deputy Principal & Chief Financial Officer** is responsible for ensuring that financial policies are adhered to and for the accurate monitoring and receipt of course costs, charges and other financial information.
- 2.2.4 **The Deputy Principal & Chief Financial Officer, Assistant Principal – Student Experience, Curriculum Managers, the Head of Student Support Services and the Head of MIS** are responsible for the correct interpretation and execution of the policy in business planning and enrolment; use of the policy to ensure that students receive correct initial advice and guidance (IAG) on the financial requirements before starting a course; for passing on information regarding material costs to interested parties such as finance and marketing and for observing refund policies when dealing with withdrawals of students from courses.
- 2.2.5 **The Head of Finance** is responsible for production and maintenance of the fees policy on an annual basis.
- 2.2.6 **All staff** are responsible for maintaining proper records of transactions and contracts, particularly in relation to income and for reporting any matter which involves, or may involve, financial irregularities to the Deputy Principal & Chief Financial Officer or the Principal.

3 Course Provision

3.2 Further Education Provision

- 3.2.1 The College will follow the guidance of the relevant funding agencies when setting its policy. At present these are the ESFA, SYMCA and WYCA. Students who are resident in other devolved areas cannot be funded by the College.
- 3.2.2 Students aged 19 or over on 31st August in the calendar year when they begin the course will, in general, pay the current ESFA, SYMCA or WYCA tuition rates and any additional course costs. There are categories of fee remission (where a student does not pay tuition fees) available for certain types of study and certain categories of student – see **Appendix 1**.
- 3.2.3 Students aged 19 or over at the start of the course in the calendar year when they begin a Level 3 (or higher) programme may be eligible for Advanced Learner Loans through Student Finance England – please refer to <https://www.gov.uk/advanced-learner-loan> for more information.
- 3.2.4 The total amount that a student could be asked to pay for a course(s) is made up of several elements (to form the total “course costs”). These elements will depend on the age and eligibility status of the student, as well as their requirement to either be residential or non-residential during the duration of the course and their usage of College services, such as meals from the canteen.
- 3.2.5 The College will advertise courses showing a total course cost for all elements (where applicable) to be charged to the student. Similarly, curriculum and associated staff interviewing prospective students must be aware of course costs where these have already been planned or must be prepared to tell students that these costs have not yet been finalised.
- 3.2.6 The college reserves the right to charge students for examination fees if:
- they are re-sitting an examination;
 - they do not attend an examination without good reason;
 - they fail to show satisfactory progress or attendance during teaching.

The relevant awarding body determines examination fees. Any student who enters for an examination after the normal awarding body deadline will be liable for a late entry fee charged by the awarding body and an admin fee, unless this is the fault of the College.

3.3 Higher Education Provision

- 3.3.1 At present, the College's Higher Education Provision is operated through a partnership agreement with either Huddersfield University or Sheffield Hallam University. The College is recognised as a delivery partner and all students on these courses are students of the relevant University (depending on the course).
- 3.3.2 All fees for Higher Education courses (either part-time or full-time) are set by the relevant University and all correspondence around tuition fee and maintenance loans plus fee payments will be handled by their finance department. All queries relating to these fees should be directed to the relevant University.
- 3.3.3 The College will state fees as set by the relevant University on its website and in all communications with potential students.

3.4 Employer Provision

- 3.4.1 The College will follow the guidance of the relevant funding agencies when setting its policy. At present these are the ESFA, SYMCA and WYCA.
- 3.4.2 Employers will be charged an agreed market rate for tuition fees and additional residential costs as appropriate.
- 3.4.3 For further guidance please see individual employer contracts and Service Level Agreements that are in place with the College.

3.5 Full Cost Provision

- 3.5.1 Any course either set in the 2023/24 business plan or requested during the year that is not eligible for ESFA or other external funding will be costed on a case-by-case basis. Each course will then be examined in detail and if approved, fees and charges will be applied accordingly.
- 3.5.2 Any students that are deemed to be attending funded courses on a non-progression basis, following advice and guidance, will fall under the category of "Leisure Learners" and will be subject to fees and charges on a full cost basis for tuition and all associated residential costs (accommodation and meals).

3.6 Instalment Payments

- 3.6.1 The College appreciates the financial burden for students and employs an instalment scheme to allow payments to be spread over a period of time.
- 3.6.2 Instalments can be arranged on full-time and some part-time courses (please ask the Finance Department for further details). Instalments must not exceed three payments (in addition to a deposit).
- 3.6.3 Deposits as part of an instalment plan should be collected at the point of enrolment (minimum of 25% of the total course costs). No student should be enrolled unless the deposit has been paid and cleared.
- 3.6.4 If a student defaults on an instalment plan, the debt will be treated according to the College's debt collection procedures. Students may have College privileges removed, such as access to College services and barring from examinations.

3.7 Refunds

3.7.1 Refunds can only be given if either of the following applies:

- **Course Cancellation:** If the College cancels (or significantly changes the content of) the course at any point before or during the course, the College will refund tuition fees.
- **Exceptional Circumstances:** If a student has to leave a course due to exceptional circumstances and is able to provide supporting evidence, then pro-rata refunds may be considered. Such consideration will be made by the Director of Curriculum & Quality and Deputy Principal & Chief Financial Officer.

3.7.2 Higher Education refunds and withdrawals are dealt with in their entirety by the relevant University – as per section 3.3 of this policy.

4 **College Services**

4.1 Residential Fees

4.1.1 Students who stay residentially may be eligible to have the costs of their accommodation and meals funded, subject to meeting additional residential criteria set out by the relevant funding body. Students who do not meet these criteria will be charged a fee.

5 **External Bookings**

5.1 The College charges fees for event bookings.

5.2 For further fees guidance and booking information, please see the College website.

6 **Policy sign off and ownership details**

Document Name:	Fees Policy 2023/24
Version Number:	4.0
Effective from:	1 August 2023
Next scheduled review date:	July 2024
Policy owner:	Head of Finance
Approved by:	The Board of Governors

7 **Revision history**

Version No	Effective date	Revision description/summary of changes	Author
1.0	1/8/2020	A substantially re-written policy which replaces all previous versions.	Head of Finance (Neil James)
2.0	1/8/2021	Updated version for 2021/22	Head of Finance (Neil James)
3.0	1/8/2022	Updated version for 2022/23	Head of Finance (Neil James)
4.0	1/8/2023	Updated version for 2023/24	Head of Finance (Neil James)

Appendix 1 – Fee Waivers

Some courses attract tuition fees; however, with the exception of fees for Higher Education courses and full cost recovery courses, fees will be waived for:

- English and maths courses where the individual has not yet achieve grade C/4 or above, including:
 - GCSE English language or maths
 - Functional Skills English or maths from Entry to level 2
 - Stepping Stone qualifications approved by the DfE
- Essential Digital Skills qualifications up to and including level 1 assessed at below level 1
- People in receipt of Job Seeker's Allowance (JSA), including those receiving National Insurance credits only;
- People in receipt of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA);
- People in receipt of Universal Credit (UC) for whom take home pay (disregarding UC payments and other benefits) is either less than £617 a month (individual claims) or £988 a month (household claims);
- People in custody who are released on temporary license, following learning outside a prison environment and not funded by the Ministry of Justice;
- People in receipt of any state benefit not listed above, and for whom take home pay (disregarding UC payments and other benefits) is either less than £617 a month (individual claims) or £988 a month (household claims) **and** want to enter employment or progress into more sustained employment. The learning must be directly relevant to the student's employment prospects and local labour needs;
- People who are eligible for ESFA, SYMCA or WYCA funding and meet the low wage threshold (those who earn less than £21,255 annual gross salary or for students living outside of West and South Yorkshire the threshold is £20,319)
- People aged 19 to 23* studying at entry or level 1 aims (excluding English, Maths or ESOL aims) who are entitled for funding for a full level 2 qualification but need a step up from basic skills in order to progress to a full level 2;
- People of any age classified as unemployed or meet the low wage threshold (those who earn less than £21,255 annual gross salary, £20,319 for students living outside of West and South Yorkshire) are fully funded when studying a qualification up to and including level 2. If classified as employed then they are co-funded (excluding 19 to 23 year old's if they are studying on a non-full level 2 and if they have not already achieved a full level 2, the student would have to pay the full cost of the course);
- People aged 19 to 23* studying their first full level 2 qualification;
- People aged 19 to 23* studying for a first full level 3 qualification;
- For some level 3 courses which are approved by ESFA, SYMCA or WYCA as 'Free Courses for jobs' where students are 24+ and is their first full level 3 qualification or are unemployed or meet the low wage threshold (earn less than £21,255 annual gross salary, £20,319 for students living outside of West and South Yorkshire)
- Some introductory courses (designated free by the College).
- For Community Learning programmes fee remission will be given to students who earn less than £21,255 annual gross salary (£20,319 for students living outside of West and South Yorkshire) or are in receipt of any state benefit and their take home pay (disregarding UC payments and other benefits) is either less than £617 a month (individual claims) or £988 a month (household claims) and will either:
 1. progress towards formal learning or employment and/or
 2. improve their health and well-being, including mental health and/or
 3. develop stronger communities

- People who qualify for fee remission under any other terms of the funding guidance for the relevant academic year as published by the ESFA, SYMCA or WYCA.

The College reserves the right to use Principal's discretion in exceptional circumstances, decided by ELT in regard to fee waivers.

Students may be eligible for financial support - please refer to the Colleges Financial Support Policy or contact Student Services for advice.

Students enrolling on a higher education course and students enrolling on a level 3 or level 4 course may be eligible for a student loan to support their fees.

*All upper age limits are defined as the age of the student at the start of their learning aim/course. However, all students commencing a course must have reached the age of 19 by 31 August 2023 ** Students who meet the ESFA, SYMCA or WYCA eligibility for funding criteria

Appendix 2 – Pound Plus Policy (Community Learning)

Pound Plus refers to additional income generated by providers over and above the Community Learning Allocation. It is a term used to describe how learning providers can show how they are maximising the value of public investment. This is important because generating additional income and revenue is central to the objective of driving up participation within a very constrained public funding environment.

Providers offering community learning have been required to lever-in additional funding (e.g. through fee income, sponsorship, grants, funding from other government departments and/or commercial sales) and to secure savings (e.g. from contributions in kind, volunteer activities, sharing services and/or pooling resources). This approach is known as "Pound Plus". The policy objective has been to widen participation in learning by ensuring as much funding as possible is targeted at enhancing opportunities for those experiencing social and/or economic disadvantage.

The College will demonstrate pound plus by pursuing the following.

- Increases in fee income;
- Increases in commercial sponsorship, joint partnership working and support via contributions in kind;
- Where possible the use of volunteers;
- Increased income from external bids;
- Rationalisation, enhancing and re-focusing of the curriculum offer;
- Improved efficiency using shared services or sharing premises;
- Greater social impact of learning on the wider community such as health, wellbeing, employability;

In pursuance of our pound plus policy we will collect the following evidence:

- Levels of fee income generated
- Other funding levered in
- Resources in kind attracted and offered
- Partnership funding arrangements

We will use this evidence to monitor the value of our pound plus strategy through the year.