

# R U N S H A W C O L L E G E

**POLICY TITLE:** Fees Policy

**APPROVED BY:** Corporation

**AUTHOR:** Vice Principal (Finance & Facilities)

**POLICY OWNER:** Janet Ivill

**POSITION:** As above

**VERSION:** 32

**LAST UP-DATED:** June 2023

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## 1 Objective

Our funding bodies, as part of the Financial Memorandum with the College, require the Governing body to approve a Fees Policy annually. The Fees Policy sets out the basis on which the College will charge learners or their sponsors for the provision of education and training. The Policy is therefore available to learners, prospective learners, sponsors and stakeholders. The Policy determines the framework within which College managers and business development staff decide the fees that the College will charge for courses to individuals, groups of learners or sponsors, how such fees should be paid and circumstances under which fees may be refunded. The Policy informs the College curriculum planning process and informs staff involved in the recording of fees data within College information systems of how fees should be calculated, structured, recorded, collected and refunded.

## 2 Definitions

- 2.1 Unless otherwise specified, **Fees** are the contribution required from the learner and/or the learner's sponsor(s) by the College towards the cost of delivering the course, including tuition and, as applicable, accommodation, equipment, resources, examination fees, travel, hospitality, additional support, levies from professional bodies and College overheads, having regard to the availability of subsidy for the course from funding bodies or other third parties and the expected number of learners on the course.
- 2.2 **Examination fees** are calculated on the basis of awarding body information and the designated course structure available at the time of course declaration. If awarding bodies have not declared their examination fees or there are alternative qualifications within the designated course then an estimate of the expected cost will be charged to the learner without any later adjustment.
- 2.3 **Fee remission** is applicable to certain categories of learners or courses whereby the funding body expects that eligible learners will not be charged fees that are essential to the course.
- 2.4 A **Sponsor** is a third party that undertakes to pay all or part of a learner's fees. This includes government loan funding agencies (eg, Student Finance England)
- 2.5 A **Digital Account** refers to an area on the apprenticeship service where employers can manage their funding and apprentices, view their account balance and plan their spending.

## 3 Scope

The Policy is intended to apply to all Runshaw College learners and all education and training provided by the College, wherever and whenever delivered.

Circumstances in which fees will not be charged are outlined in the Policy.

#### **4 Relationship to guidelines, procedures, other policies and legal requirements**

- 4.1 In cases of doubt, reference should be made to funding and audit rules issued by relevant funding bodies (principally the Education and Skills Funding Agency ('ESFA') and Student Finance England ('SLE')). Arrangements for fees charged for high school pupils are covered by protocols with the high schools.
- 4.2 Runshaw College staff that wish to use Staff Development resources to obtain a fee discount for a Runshaw College course should refer to the appropriate Staff Development procedures.
- 4.3 Other relevant policies and guidelines are for Admissions and Learner Support, Bursaries, loans and grants, Hardship and Welfare, which set out the circumstances under which learners are eligible to enrol for courses and the College or third parties may provide financial assistance to learners towards the payment of fees.
- 4.4 The College has written procedures that provide guidance for staff members who may be involved in collecting fees and issuing refunds.

#### **5 POLICY STATEMENT**

- 5.1 The College will inform all learners and / or their sponsors before enrolment of the fees that they have to pay to undertake a course. If the course extends for more than one academic year then the fee quoted will either be (a) that applicable for the full course, or (b) for the first academic year but with an indication of fees that may be applicable for the subsequent year(s) of the course.

##### **5.2 Adult Further Education courses**

- 5.2.1 Tuition fees are determined and approved by the Senior Management Team during the annual curriculum planning process, having due regard for the number of hours taught, resources required, anticipated group size, market demand, the amount of funding subsidy, funding body guidance and competitor pricing. Variations to the authorised fees must be approved by the Vice Principal (Finance & Facilities).
- 5.2.2 Published course fees will be inclusive of tuition and core course examination fees. If learners are entered for qualifications in addition to the core qualification of the course then they will be required to pay examination fees as applicable for the additional qualifications.
- 5.2.3 Any additional fees specifically associated with the course (e.g. residential costs, text books etc) will be notified to the learner.
- 5.2.4 If the learner has to pay registration fees to a professional or awarding body as a requirement of the course this will be stated in the course description.
- 5.2.5 Learners who fail to achieve their qualification by the expected end date or learners transferring in from other institutions who have previously failed to achieve the qualification may, subject to authorisation by the relevant Head of Studies and/or Assistant Principal, attend further classes and be charged an additional fee on a pro-rata basis to the fee applicable for the course and the full cost of the examination fee.

### **5.3 Funding Entitlements Adult Further Education courses**

- 5.3.1 A learner aged under 19 on 31 August in the calendar year of the start of the programme of study who meets ESFA eligibility criteria is exempt from tuition fees and 'first attempt' examination fees.
- 5.3.2 The ESFA arrangements for determining which courses attract full or partial subsidy from fees are complex, subject to change, and depend on the nature of the qualification, the age and personal circumstances of the learner, the learner's previous qualifications, whether the qualification is to be delivered in the classroom or in the workplace and (if the latter) the size of the employer.
- 5.3.3 The College will refer to the latest ESFA funding guidance to determine whether a learner is entitled to ESFA full or co-funding and/or whether Advanced Learner Loan funding may be applicable.
- 5.3.4 Students seeking Advanced Learner Loan fee assistance should contact Student Finance England.
- 5.3.5 Learners aged 19-24, with a recognised LDA or EHCP may be exempt from tuition fees and examination fees. Eligibility for funding must be confirmed with the College's Additional Learning Support department prior to enrolment.

### **5.4 Apprenticeship fees**

- 5.4.1 The Director of School, Employer & Community Relationships is responsible for determining the fees for Apprenticeship programmes. Fees will be agreed between the College and employer and based upon the ESFA published bandings and programme delivery costs. The Employer Relationship team follow internal guidance to ensure that agreed fees are commensurate with financial targets. All fees quoted will be inclusive of training costs, end point assessment and on programme assessment. Prior learning will be considered in the negotiation of fees to ensure that fees are not charged for skills already attained by the apprentice.
- 5.4.2 Where fees are payable via an employers digital account, the College will ensure accurate recording of data in order to ensure fees are appropriately released from digital accounts.
- 5.4.3 In the event that a fee exceeds the maximum allowed by the funding band for the chosen apprenticeship, then the employer must pay in full the difference (it cannot be funded from a digital account). VAT may be applicable to the difference.
- 5.4.4 Where a digital account is not being used, and hence an employer contribution is required, the employer will be invoiced for full value of the fee at the start of the Apprenticeship programme and a payment schedule agreed. Equal monthly instalments over the term of the Apprenticeship will be allowable under the strict agreement that no default in payment occurs.
- 5.4.5 If any circumstances change that affect the fee agreement made between the College and an employer, then agreements will be revised or a new agreement created.
- 5.4.6 Where a change of circumstances means that an Apprenticeship is no longer being delivered, no further funds will be transferred from an employers' digital after the agreed withdrawal date. If an employer contribution was payable, the College will review the value of the training and end-point assessment already delivered and will adjust the invoiced fee accordingly.

### **5.5 Courses for high school pupils**

- 5.5.1 Fees to high schools for their pupils attending courses specifically designated for 14 to 16 year olds are authorised by the Deputy or Assistant Principal responsible for this provision having regard to the number of hours taught, resources required, anticipated group size, competitor pricing and agreement with the high schools.

## **5.6 Eligibility**

- 5.6.1 Applications for remission of tuition fees must be in accordance with relevant funding body rules. Remission of tuition fees only applies for eligible learners to approved courses that are subsidised by a funding body. Unless otherwise stated, remission includes the cost of 'first attempt' examination fees and resources that are deemed as essential to the course and solely for use on the course, so long as the learner has made satisfactory progress on the course. Examination fees may be charged for subsequent attempts. Learners and their employers or sponsors (if applicable) must provide evidence to prove eligibility for fee remission as required by the College and remain liable for any fee until all requested evidence has been provided to and accepted by the College. Fee waiver evidence must be provided before the course starts.
- 5.6.2 Examination fees may be charged for second and subsequent attempts for learners aged under 19 on 31 August in the calendar year of the start of the programme of study, other than for duplicate provision explicitly funded by the ESFA.
- 5.6.3 In exceptional cases the relevant Deputy Principal or Assistant Principal may waive examination fees or may charge examination fees to a learner who fails to attend an examination or for which a fee has been charged for the learner to the College by the relevant awarding body.
- 5.6.4 Residency eligibility will be assessed on the latest ESFA guidance. Applications from prospective students who do not meet residency criteria should be referred to the Vice Principal (Finance & Facilities) who will authorise the amount of fees that should be chargeable, having regard to relevant funding body guidance and College business plans.
- 5.6.5 Learners that do not meet funding body eligibility criteria will be charged a fee that reflects the unsubsidised cost of the course and anticipated support requirements. The fee charged will approximate to the funding that the College would have received from the relevant funding body for a fully subsidised eligible learner for the course plus any funding associated with anticipated additional support. The fee may be varied at the discretion of the relevant Deputy Principal or Assistant Principal and with the authorisation of the Vice Principal (Finance & Facilities). General Admission criterion is defined in the Sixth Form College Admissions Policy and the Adult Admissions Policy.
- 5.6.6 The College reserves the right to decline to enrol a prospective learner if the applicant has not paid all fees or other monies due from a previous course or for any other reason, as decided by the relevant Senior Manager.

## **5.7 Payment of fees**

- 5.7.1 All payments must be made, or payment arrangements in place and approved, for a student to be enrolled. Unless otherwise stated in this policy, fees are due for payment on or before the start date of the course.
- 5.7.2 Students who choose to pay their fees through the SFE retain personal responsibility for their fees until fully paid by the SFE to the College. Students may be invoiced personally for any

outstanding balance. It is the student's responsibility to ensure they apply directly to the SFE for the appropriate fee amount and to provide the relevant evidence and loan agreements and adhere to attendance requirements to ensure the fees are paid to the College.

- 5.7.3 Payments may be made by Runshaw Pay, bank transfer, Debit Cards (Switch or Delta) or Credit Cards (Visa or Master Cards).
- 5.7.4 Payment of fees may be made in person at the Leyland or Chorley Campus, by telephone or online via the College's RunshawPay portal.
- 5.7.5 Any additional discretionary fees associated with the course (e.g. residential costs) may be collected during the course in accordance with College tutor fee collection guidance and prior to the activity taking place.

## **5.8 Payment by instalments**

- 5.8.1 By arrangement, learners paying their own fees may be able to pay by instalments if the total fee payable by the learner for a course is greater than £500 and the course is of at least twenty weeks duration. These arrangements must be ratified before enrolment can be completed and before the learner attends the course.
- 5.8.2 Specific payment plan details for each learner will be by course, determined by the Head of Finance.
- 5.8.3 The first instalment is payable on or before enrolment and before the learner attends the course. All instalments must be paid before the earlier of the final week of the course or date of the final examination for the course.
- 5.8.4 Any default in a payment plan will result in the balance of the unpaid fee becoming immediately due for payment.
- 5.8.5 Employers wishing to pay for Apprenticeships by instalments are permitted to do so under the terms outlined in 5.4.4 (above).

## **5.9 Payment of fees by sponsors**

- 5.9.1 Employers or other sponsors may pay all or part of a learner's fees on their behalf. Invoices to employers, other sponsors or high schools are payable in accordance with College terms of credit. Individual learners must bring a purchase order or letter of authorisation or recognised training voucher, clearly authorised by the sponsor, with them to enrolment or enclose it with the confirmation form.
- 5.9.2 The College reserves the right to decline acceptance of a sponsor.
- 5.9.3 The learner is responsible for any remaining fees and these should be paid directly or by payment arrangements on or before enrolment.
- 5.9.4 The College will invoice the sponsor or record the payment and complete the learner's enrolment.
- 5.9.5 This arrangement also applies to Runshaw College employees where the College has agreed to be the sponsor.

## **5.10 Refund of fees**

- 5.10.1 Students participating in a course being funded via either the Adult Education Budget, Advanced Learner Loans or through a self-financing arrangement will only be eligible for a refund in the following circumstances:
- The course has been cancelled by the College.
  - The student withdraws from the course at least 2 weeks prior to the course start date.
  - There are individual exceptional circumstances, as approved by a member of the Senior Management Team. In this case, an application for refund of fees must be made in writing. The College reserves the right to reject an application for a refund.
- 5.10.2 Refunds will not be payable in the event of a variation of the course delivery model (ie, movement between on-line and on-campus delivery)
- 5.10.3 Where fees have been paid in full or in part by a sponsor then the College will, so far as is practicable, ensure that the appropriate refund is made to the sponsor.
- 5.10.4 Students will not be personally refunded if payment has been made via the Student Finance England. If applicable, a change of circumstances will be administered on the SFE portal.
- 5.10.5 Where a refund is due for an Apprenticeship programme, an adjustment credit note will be issued to the employer (for the employer fee only). Refunds against an employer's digital account are managed by the ESFA. The College cannot make any refunds in respect of digital accounts.
- 5.10.6 Appeals in the case of a rejected refund application should be made in writing to the Vice Principal (Finance & Facilities) and will managed in accordance with the College's complaints procedure.

## **5.11 Non-payment of fees**

The College will take steps to ensure the payment of all fees and/or fee instalments. Students may be informed if their parent/guardian/sponsor has defaulted on any payments. Where necessary and proportionate, one or more of the following sanctions may be applied to those with fees outstanding or overdue fees:

- termination of enrolment and exclusion from College;
- refusal to re-enrol;
- cancellation of examination entries
- denial of attendance at College events or trips;
- denial of attendance at awards ceremonies;
- withdrawal of some college (eg. Library, IT) facilities;
- application of the student disciplinary policy (for failure to follow College policies/procedures)
- any other reasonable sanction(s) that the college deems appropriate in the circumstances.

In addition to those steps referred to above, the College reserves the right to refer unpaid fees to external agencies to pursue payments and/or seek recovery through the courts.

## **5.12 Commercial bookings**

The College may let out facilities and/or arrange bespoke events upon request. Fees will be authorised by the Director of School, Employer & Community Relationships having regard to resource requirements and operational costs.

**6 Date from which effective**

This version of the Policy applies for enrolments to all courses or commercial bookings commencing after 31 July 2023.

**7 Compliance and verification**

The application of the Fees Policy may be subject to audit. The Quality, Management Information and Student Tracking department (QMIST) and Finance Department may check the application of the policy to ensure courses have been correctly declared and to ensure that all fees due from learners are correctly recorded.