

## FEES POLICY 2023/24

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|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
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## Scope

This policy sets out the way in which fees including the way in which fees including tuition and other fees are set.

### 1. Policy Statement

- 1.1. The purpose of this policy is to set out the framework for fees and charges for 2023/24, the process for payment of fees, the options that are available for payment of fees and the sanctions that we apply in the event of a default.
- 1.2. The College is committed to ensuring that its course fees are fair and represent value for money. The College also commits to providing clear information about its fees, concessions and payment methods.
- 1.3. Fees and charges are reviewed and set annually by the Corporation in accordance with guidance issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA).
- 1.4. Fees are set for year 1 of the course. The College will not increase fees for subsequent years for learners on a course lasting more than one year, subject to clause 2.3.

### 2. Context

- 2.1. This policy applies to tuition, exam fees and other charges to students, employers and sponsors for College provision. It is relevant to anyone studying on our courses who is required to pay a fee whether the fee is paid by them or on their behalf by a third party such as an employer.
- 2.2. This policy does not take precedent over provisions contained within an individual contract that may exist between the College and a customer.

- 2.3. The College reserves the right to change fees during the year in the event of updated guidance from the ESFA/WMCA or where there is a need to remain competitive in specific markets or attract students for courses related to an identified skills gap.

### **3. Payment Principles**

- 3.1. Fees are payable upon enrolment. Depending on the value of the fee and the length of the course the fee can be paid in instalments as prescribed in the college's instalment agreement with the student at enrolment. A minimum of 20% of the listed tuition fees and all exams and costs listed in the course information are payable at enrolment and the remainder payable throughout the period of study as stipulated.
- 3.2. Instalments will usually cover four payments but can be extended to seven however all fees should be collected prior to the end of the programme. Fees will be collected by bank debit or credit card or by on-line payment (where available).
- 3.3. Interest will not be charged to the student, provided the fees are paid in accordance with the instalment plan. The college reserves the right to charge interest where the instalments are not paid within the agreed instalment plan at the rates set in the Late Payment of Commercial Debt Act 1998.
- 3.4. Sponsored students must provide a valid purchase order from their sponsoring organisation before their enrolment can be completed or in exceptional circumstances, a letter of sponsorship (on headed paper) may be accepted. Should the student's sponsor fail to pay all or part of the fees due, these will become the responsibility of the individual student.
- 3.5. Where an Advanced Learner Loan or Loan for Higher Education is being used to fund a course, it is the responsibility of the student to ensure that this is approved in a timely fashion and the application must be begun before the start of the course. Students applying for a loan remain liable for the full cost of fees until the loan is fully approved by the Student Loan Company (SLC) and the college, and payments have been authorised by the SLC.

- 3.6. Students can choose to self-finance their courses, instead of taking out the loan with the SLC; the college offers instalments for these students.
- 3.7. It should be noted that SLC payments stop being paid for a student as soon as they withdraw, and the student then becomes responsible for paying the remaining fees owed to the college.
- 3.8. For courses funded by WMCA, payments stop being paid for a student as soon as they withdraw. The student then becomes responsible for paying the remaining fees owed to the college.
- 3.9. All fees and debts are collectable by the college and the college will issue reminders to pay. The college will engage debt collecting agencies to collect fees outstanding where all other recovery options have been exhausted.
- 3.10. The college reserves the right to take legal action where all other attempts to collect outstanding debts have failed.
- 3.11. All fees must be settled prior to entry to an examination.
- 3.12. Students with outstanding fees may not receive their certificates and may not enrol on new courses until these are settled.

#### **4. MAIN FEE CATEGORIES**

##### **Students aged 16-19 and students aged 16-24 with an EHCP.**

- 4.1. In accordance with ESFA policy the College will not charge any tuition, exam or resource fees that are necessary for completing the course to any student aged 16-19 or 24 with an Education and Health Care Plan, who is on a study programme or other eligible course funded by the ESFA.

##### **Adult Education**

- 4.2. Adult education courses are aimed at students who are 19 or above at the 31 August in the academic year the course starts. Funding for these courses is provided by the WMCA/ESFA either in part or entirety; dependent upon the student's eligibility, they may be either:

- Fully funded – no student contribution to the cost of the course
  - Co-funded - A partial government contribution reduces the course fees accordingly.
  - Loan funded – a student takes out an Advanced Learner Loan with the Student Loans Company (SLC)
  - Full Cost – there is no Government contribution and students must pay in full the published tuition fee for their course,
- 4.3. Tuition fees for 'Co-funded' courses are set so that the total income the College receives for a course does not exceed the full value assigned by the Funding Agency. Tuition fees for 'Full Cost' courses are set at course level and aim to deliver a contribution towards college overheads (typically 50%) and to reflect market conditions.
- 4.4. For the purposes of fees age is calculated as defined by the ESFA and WMCA as the age on the 31 August in the academic year in which the course starts. However, there are two exceptions to this:
- Some level 3 courses are fundable by loans if the learner is 19+ on the first day of learning of the course.
  - An apprentice's age is calculated as the age on the first day of learning and may impact certain incentive payments to the employer.
- 4.5. The table in Appendix I sets out the funding status of adult provision.

### **Advanced Learner Loans**

- 4.6. Advanced Learner Loans are provided by the Student Loans Company, they are not means-tested and are available to eligible learners who are studying an eligible qualification and are:
- Aged 19 or older on the first day of starting their designated loans qualification.
  - Studying one or more designated loans qualifications at levels 3, 4, 5, or 6
  - Applying for a loan of more than £300.
  - Has not previously had more than 3 Advanced Learner Loans in their lifetime.

- 4.7. Eligibility for a loan does not remove any legal entitlement the student may have to full funding for their first full level 3 qualification.
- 4.8. The Student Loans Company is responsible for assessing a student's eligibility for a loan, in the event that a loan application is declined the student will become immediately liable for the published tuition fee.
- 4.9. The College reserves the right to take action to collect from a student the difference between the loan funding received and the published tuition fee in the event that a student withdraws from their course.

### Higher Education Courses

- 4.10. The HE fees for courses commencing in the academic year 2023/24 are set out in the table below. Fees are subject to change in the event of any legislative reform.

|                              |        |                                    |
|------------------------------|--------|------------------------------------|
| Part-time HE courses         | £3,495 | per annum (inc registration fees)  |
| Full-time HE courses: Year 1 | £5,995 | inclusive of any registration fees |
| Year 2                       | £5,995 | inclusive of any registration fees |

- 4.11. Students may be eligible for maintenance and tuition fee support in the form of grants or loans from Student Finance England. Any such funding depends primarily on their personal and family income and circumstances.
- 4.12. Student Finance England is responsible for assessing a student's eligibility for a loan/grant, in the event that a loan/grant application is declined the student will become immediately liable for the published tuition fee.
- 4.13. The College reserves the right to take action to collect from a student the difference between the loan funding received and the published tuition fee in the event that a student withdraws from their course.
- 4.14. Additional fees may be charged by HE partner institutions on top of the fees set out above.

### Commercial Courses, including International.

- 4.15. These are courses that do not attract any government funding and are either:

- Public, being publicly advertised provision available for anyone (such as that in the prospectus).
- Bespoke, being provision arranged for people from specific organisations such as an employer.

4.16. The College sets fees to ensure that they fully cover the delivery costs and make a contribution to overheads. Any surplus from these courses is reinvested in the College infrastructure to benefit all students.

## **5. Apprenticeships**

- 5.1. In accordance with government funding rules students studying an apprenticeship will not be charged any tuition, examination or registration fees, the employer is responsible for the full cost of learning not covered by government funding.
- 5.2. An employer can use their Levy Fund to cover the full cost of learning. In the event that there are insufficient funds in the Levy Fund to meet the cost of learning they will have to pay a contribution of 5% of the total cost of learning (this is often called 'co-investment').
- 5.3. An employer who does not have a Levy Fund is required to make a contribution to the cost of learning for apprentices aged 19 and over and aged 16-18 if they have more than 50 employees. At the time of writing this was 5% of the total cost of learning (this is often referred to as co-investment).
- 5.4. Employers must ensure they create an account to manage their apprenticeships. They must register with the Apprenticeship Service to reserve funding for any planned apprenticeship starts. Apprenticeship funds can be reserved for up to 6 months from the planned start date.
- 5.5. Prior to learning commencing there will be a contract in place between the College and Employer that includes the total cost of learning, the amounts payable by the employer and payment method and terms.
- 5.6. If at any point during or after learning has ended, an apprenticeship is deemed to not be eligible for government funding or such funding is withdrawn, the employer will be liable for the cost of the learning as detailed in the contract.

- 5.7. Where an Apprentice attracts additional government funding known as 'incentive payments,' the College will make the payment to the Employer within 30 working days of receiving the funds from the ESFA. The employer is responsible for the reimbursement of any incentive payments made in error, or where they or the student was or becomes ineligible for them.
- 5.8. Where an Apprentice changes employer, leaves learning or is made redundant the funding will cease with effect from the date of the event. It is the employer's responsibility to ensure that no further payments over the pro-rated cost are made to the college from their Digital Account.
- 5.9. Where the cost of an apprenticeship exceeds the maximum funding band or the cost of the EPA is greater than 20% of the maximum funding band, the employer will be charged for the additional cost.

## 6. **Additional Charges**

- 6.1. Any student whose course is fully funded by the government will not be charged for examination, professional body registration or resources that are necessary for completion of the learning aim.
- 6.2. Other additional charges that may apply include:
  - The cost of any equipment and clothing necessary to undertake the programme of study. If these are purchased with the aid of student support funds, they will remain the property of the student once the course has been completed.
  - A contribution towards the cost of any materials on practical courses such as art and design programmes may be charged. In the case of fully funded students such a contribution will be voluntary, but a student who does not make the specified contribution will not be allowed to retain any practical work they have completed.
  - Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check to take part in learning, If the learning is associated with the learner's employment, their employer is responsible for carrying out and paying for this check.
  - The cost of any trips or visits associated with the programme of study,



- 6.3. The student will be personally responsible for paying any membership fees to a professional body (such as AAT, CIPD) even where required for completion of the course. Financial support for these fees may be available from the college bursary funds for eligible students.
- 6.4. Students will be advised of any additional charges that apply to their specific course upon enrolment.

### **Examination/End point Assessment Retakes**

- 6.5. This section of the policy applies to all students whether or not they are in receipt of full government funding for their course or apprenticeship.
- 6.6. The College reserves the right to charge a student and/or Employer for the cost of resitting an examination or re-taking an End Point Assessment (EPA) including a £10 administration fee. This includes situations where a student has not presented themselves for examination and/or EPA and there has been a cost to the College.
- 6.7. A student will not be re-entered for an examination, or an EPA re-arranged until payment has been received in full.

## **7. Payment Terms**

- 7.1. All fees must be paid in full when enrolling/booking by one of the following methods:
  - Cash
  - Cheque
  - Debit/Credit Card
  - Bank Transfer
  - By telephone using a debit or credit card
  - Evidence from an employer that they have agreed to pay
  - Evidence of application for an Advanced Learner Loan/HE loan
  - Evidence of address and income
  - A completed instalment agreement, payable by direct debit.
- 7.2. Where an employer has agreed to pay the fee, the student must provide either an official purchase order or a written statement from the employer on company letter head stating that they have agreed to pay the fees. The letter must state:

- The student(s) name(s)
- Course title
- Confirmation of amount to pay (if no amount is stated the assumption is that the employer is liable for the full fees associated)
- Details of where the invoice should be sent
- Name and Signature of the authorising persons

7.3. The College will invoice the employer or sponsor and payment will be due within 14 days. If the College is unable to obtain payment from the employer or sponsor responsibility for the fees and charges will automatically revert to the student.

7.4. If the College has not received confirmation from the SLC/SFE that an Advanced Learner Loan or HE loan has been awarded within 6 weeks of the course starting, then the learner will become responsible for payment of the outstanding fees.

## **8. Financial Fee Support**

8.1. This policy complies with the College's Equality and Diversity Policy. For students with financial hardship various fee support routes may be available to fund their tuition and other fees. Currently the main alternatives are as follows:

- Discretionary Learner Support Funds for example for help with travel, course materials and equipment or childcare costs (please see the College's Bursary Support Policy for eligibility).
- Adult learning grants.
- FE and HE Student loans.
- Any applicable government schemes.

8.2. Students applying to the Discretionary Learner Support Fund for help towards fees may still be expected to make a contribution.

## **9. Refunds**

9.1. Students will be eligible for a full refund if:

- The college has cancelled the course, or the course has been cancelled within three weeks of its start date.
- The student withdraws from a course before the first class.

9.2. A partial refund will be payable if a student has been attending a class for more than three weeks and withdraws and is unable to attend due to ill health and can supply a medical certificate. The refund will be made on the following basis:

| Course length         | Refund payable   |
|-----------------------|--|
| 15 weeks or less      | No refund payable  |
| 15-30 weeks           | 50% if attendance ends before 15 weeks   |
| Courses over 30 weeks | 67% if attendance ends before 15 weeks<br>33% if attendance ends before 30 weeks |

9.3. Where an Employer is paying a course fee, a full refund is payable if the student leaves the business before the start of the course. If the student leaves employment after this point, we expect the employer to recover any fees from their employee. If a student wishes to continue the course, they will be personally liable for paying fees.

9.4. Where an Apprentice is withdrawn from a programme of study either by the employer or the learner, no refund will be given for the period in which learning occurred and fees will be due up until the official date of withdrawal.

9.5. Refunds will not be payable in the following cases:

- Where an alternative course has been offered and accepted by the student, fees paid will be transferred to the new course. Overpaid fees will be refunded at the time of course transfer.
- Where a student has taken a loan from the Student Loan Company the SLC will clawback any appropriate fees.
- Fees for unrecoverable payments made on behalf of the student by the college, such as exam fees, DBS checks etc.

9.6. If a student would like to request a refund in any circumstances outside of those described above a written letter should accompany the Application for Refund of Fees and be directed to the Chief Executive & Principal, Dudley College of Technology, The Broadway, Dudley DY1 4AS.

9.7. Any student who wishes to ask for a refund must take the following actions:

- Discuss the matter with their tutor and meet with an Information Advice and Guidance advisor to discuss the options available to them.
  - Complete the Application for Refund of Fees form which can be requested from the college's Finance Department or Learner Services.
  - Return the form to The Finance Department, Dudley College of Technology, The Broadway, Dudley DY1 4AS.
  - An acknowledgment of the request will be issued by email or SMS message.
- 9.8. Refunds will usually be made within 30 days of receipt of the application form, once approved.

## Appendix I

### ESFA/WMCA Adult funding matrix summary

| Provision   | 19-23 years of age     |                | 24+ years of age                      |                |
|---|------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------------|----------------|
|   | Unemployed or low wage | Employed       | Unemployed or low wage                | Employed       |
| <b>English and maths</b> , up to and including level 2 – not achieved GCSE grade 4/C or higher  | Fully funded *         | Fully funded * | Fully funded *                        | Fully funded * |
| <b>Essential Digital Skills</b> qualifications up to and including level 1  | Fully funded *         | Fully funded * | Fully funded *                        | Fully funded * |
| <b>First full level 2</b> (excluding English and maths)   | Fully funded *         | Fully funded * | Fully funded *                        | Co-funded      |
| Learning aims up to and including level 2 where the student has already achieved a first full level 2 or above                                | Fully funded           | Co-funded      | Fully funded                          | Co-funded      |
| <b>First full level 3</b> (national policy legal entitlement)   | Fully funded           | Fully funded   | Fully Funded ** (WMCA residents only) | Loan funded    |
| <b>Level 3 adult offer</b> (students without a full level 3 or above accessing a qualification on the level 3 adult offer qualification list) | Fully Funded +         | Fully Funded + | Fully Funded +                        | Fully Funded + |
| <b>Level 3</b> (previously achieved a full level 3 or above)  | Loan funded            | Loan funded    | Loan funded                           | Loan funded    |
| <b>Additional level 3+</b> covered under WMCA flexibility (WMCA residents only)   | Fully Funded #         | Fully Funded # | Fully Funded #                        | Loan funded    |
| <b>Level 4</b>  | Loan funded            | Loan funded    | Loan funded                           | Loan funded    |
| <b>ESOL</b> (English for speakers of other languages) learning  | Fully funded           | Co-funded      | Fully funded                          | Co-funded      |

|                             |  |  |  |  |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| up to and including level 2 |  |  |  |  |
|-----------------------------|--|--|--|--|

\* 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

\*\* Loan funded for non WMCA residents

+ Level 3 Adult Offer – only for courses that appear on the ESFA/WMCA list of eligible courses.

# WMCA approved flex list – Level 3+ are fully funded where they support WMCA priorities related to the movement of residents into work or upskilling those in low pay jobs

**Low wage:** has an annual gross salary of less than £18,135 (£17,004 for non WMCA residents)

**Unemployed:** not currently in employment and seeking employment **OR** not currently in employment and re-training in order to seek employment where the training is directly relevant to their employment prospects and local labour market needs **OR** in receipt of JSA, ESA or Universal Credit with a take home pay of less than £343 per month (£549 per month if a joint claimant).