



SANDWELL COLLEGE

TUITION FEES POLICY
and

HIGHER EDUCATION
REFUND AND COMPENSATION POLICY

V3

2019/20

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Policy Statement

Sandwell College will set full and part-time vocational course fees taking into account the guidance given by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) and Office for Students (OFS).

The expectation is that the tuition fee will be calculated at 50% of the unweighted national rate for each learning aim a learner follows. ***However, the college has the freedom to adjust the fee level in order to be able to respond appropriately to market forces. Separate arrangements are in place for adult learners, studying Level 3 provision and subject to Advanced Learner Loans. Further details are available in the section on Fees.***

Heads of Department can recommend an addition to the minimum rate where it is felt that the programme can attract fees above the minimum rate.

The College's aim is to provide high quality education and training programmes which represent value for money for all areas of the community.

Any public information about courses (where appropriate) will indicate the likely total cost for learners who are eligible for ESFA funding (i.e. those satisfying ESFA eligibility criteria). The total cost will include any costs associated with tuition, examination fees or costs of subject specific materials.



Further Education Courses (ESFA Funded)

Eligibility

Learner eligibility for ESFA funded courses is assessed in line with the ESFA Funding Guidance 2019/20 but, in general, learners will be eligible if:

1. They are a citizen of the United Kingdom and Islands, have Right of Abode (the right to live permanently in the United Kingdom without any immigration restrictions), or are a citizen of a country that is within the European Economic Area (EEA) .
2. They have been ordinarily resident in the United Kingdom and Islands or the European Union (EU) or the European Economic Area (EEA) continuously for at least the previous three years on the first day of learning.
3. The learning is taking place in England.

The detailed eligibility criteria can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-education-funding-guidance>

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/sfa-funding-rules>



Further details about ESFA financial contribution and eligibility for fee remission can be found at:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sfa-funding-rules>

Fee Type	Cost	
	Fully Funded Learner	Co-funded Learner
Tuition Fees	None apply	Published fee set by the
Initial Examination Fees	None apply	college in line with ESFA rules. Awarding body examination fee + £3.50 administration fee
Other mandatory course fees (i.e. equipment, materials etc.)	None apply	As published by the college.
Registration fees to	Paid for by learner or, if	Paid for by learner directly to

professional bodies (i.e. AAT) learner is eligible, via the professional body
Discretionary Learner Support fund.

* Learners must either produce acceptable fee remission evidence at the start of their course or agree a payment plan if they are not fully funded. Failure to do so may prevent the learners from being registered with the awarding body and sitting their examinations.

Any learner who has failed to provide evidence or agree a payment plan by October half term may be automatically withdrawn from their programme of study.

If a learner should stop attending their course of study, for whatever reason, the college will take any ~~necessary steps to recover any unpaid fees for the remainder of the course.~~

19+ learners studying on Level 3+ courses (subject to Advanced Learning Loans)

In line with government policy, any adult aged 19 or over who already has a full level three qualification and any adult aged 24 or over, regardless of prior attainment, wishing to study for a level



three or level four programme (other than apprenticeships), regardless of personal circumstances or benefit/employment status, must either:

- Apply for an Advanced Learning Loan to cover part or all of the course costs
- Pay for the course directly in full

The fees (loan value) charged to such learners can be set to the maximum loan value published by the Education and Skills Funding Agency for the course of study. ***The college however has the freedom to adjust the fee level (i.e. the loan value) in order to be able to respond appropriately to market forces.***

The published fee will include the total cost of the course (tuition, examination, administration, materials etc.).

Students who choose to pay the full cost of the course independently must agree on a payment plan before the start of their programme of study.

If a learner should stop attending their course of study, for whatever reason, the college may take steps to recover any unpaid fees for the remainder of the course.

In line with funding guidance, the college reserves the right to charge examination fees should students not adhere to college requirements on attendance.



Higher Education (HE) Courses

HE Students

In general HE students can apply for loans to cover costs via the Student Loan Company.

Tuition & Registration Costs – HNC, HND and Foundation Degrees

The fees charged for Higher Education Courses in 2019/20 are detailed in the table below. These include both tuition costs and registration costs with the awarding body.

Direct OFS Funded	Full-time programme	Part time-programme
New students	£5,000 per year	£2,500 per year
Continuing Students	£5,000 per year	£2,500 per year
Franchised from partner	Full-time programme	Part time-programme
universities		

In line with partner universities fees policies.

Any learner who has failed to provide proof that they have applied for a student loan by October half term may be automatically withdrawn from their programme of study.

If a learner should stop attending their course of study, for whatever reason, the college will take any necessary steps to recover any unpaid fees for the remainder of the course.



Students of Compulsory School Age

Admission for these students is subject to approval by the Vice Principal (Teaching & Learning) and the appropriate Head of Department.

Admission to college is subject to:

1. agreement, in writing, of the learners school and/or the Local Authority within whose area the learner resides.
2. Agreement, in writing, of the funding source for the learner, the funding value and the payment schedule.

Enrolments and Learner Agreements must clearly identify any under 16 years students and the designated programme code used.

Full Cost Provision

Any full cost provision (i.e. fully funded by individuals or employers) will be priced to ensure that it generates appropriate income contribution to the college.

Apprenticeships

In line with government reforms, apprenticeships starting on or after 1st May 2017 are subject to new rules around financial contributions.

There are no charges to apprentices, but employers, depending on the size of the organisation, the age of apprentices recruited and their levy/non-levy paying status will be required to make a financial contribution to the cost of the programme.

The negotiated apprenticeship price for new recruits will form part of the contract between the employer and the college and will be set at the start of programme.

In general, levy paying employers will be covering the full cost of the apprenticeships delivered for their apprentices from the organisation's levy pot. Non – levy paying employers will be expected to make a 5% cash contribution to the overall cost of the apprenticeship.

Exceptions and general rules governing apprenticeship charges are detailed in full at

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/sfa-funding-rules#to-2019-funding-year>



Changes to Fees

Fees will only be amended during the academic year in exceptional circumstances.

Any requests to amend tuition fees are to be submitted in writing by the appropriate Head of Department to the Director of Funding, Information and Exams and Director of Finance.

Heads of Department will be notified of approval or rejection of their request.

For students who have already paid the fee prior to them being amended to a higher or lower fee, the following will apply:-

- Reduced amended fee – refund of difference.
- Increased amended fee – no additional charge.

Payment by Instalment

- Payment by instalment is not available for costs up to and including £300.
- Where the costs are over £300 and the course has a duration of more than 18 weeks this can be paid by instalments with the first payment (made on enrolment) being 40% and the remaining payable by direct debit **9 weeks (20%), 13 weeks (20%) and 18 weeks (final 20%) from the published start date of the course.**

For a course costing over £300 and with duration of less than 18 weeks the final 60% must be paid after six weeks.

Receipts

A receipt for any payment must be issued to all students, where applicable, immediately upon completion of their enrolment.



Late Payment of Examination Fees

All students who need to pay for their examination fees will be subject to a late entry fee of £20, if they fail to submit their examination entry fee by the college-notified deadlines. If they miss the board-notified deadline they will also be charged the board late entry fee (which varies depending on the examining board).

Examination Resit Fees

The table below shows the entitlement to resits and associated charges

ESFA funded 16 – 18 Learners	ESFA Fully Funded Learners	ESFA Co-funded Learners	Literacy/Numeracy (ESFA funded)
One free resit	One free resit		
then	then	Awarding body fee + £3.50 administration	All re-sits free*

Awarding body fee +

Awarding body fee +

£3.50 administration

£3.50 administration

**In response to Wolf report*



Refunds

Refunds of tuition fees will only be applicable in the following circumstances.

- The programme is cancelled by the College
- The student withdraws prior to the course commencement.

Note: - The Director of Finance can in exceptional circumstances award a refund.

Where a student has applied for a refund before the class starts (use date received on written request) then a full refund applies. Any refund will be subject to a £25 administration fee.

Where a student transfers from one course to another, the difference in programme fees will be refunded. Where applicable, the student will pay the difference should there be a higher fee.

Where a student has paid a fee but is entitled to remission e.g. under 18 years, or is in receipt of an appropriate benefit then a full refund applies.

Where an additional fee has been included and paid at enrolment e.g. materials, visits etc, then this can be refunded on the approval of the appropriate Senior Managers. The refunded amount will reflect materials etc used to date.

All refunds will be formally recorded and documented in accordance with the College Financial Regulations.



College Staff Development (Not Teacher Training)

Staff development is available to all staff employed by the College where the course is job related. Applications should be made on the appropriate form.

Note: the completion of this form is applicable to all staff development and should be forwarded to the appropriate line manager for approval.

Staff development must be approved prior to enrolment and attendance. In this circumstance, tuition fees for in-house courses will be paid via the staff development budget.

The approved staff development form must be shown as evidence at the time of enrolment.



Financial Support for Students

The College will operate financial support schemes (primarily the Discretionary Learner Support Fund) in order to provide assistance to:

- Full and part-time students over the age of 16 and following a FE programme of study funded by the ESFA.

The scope of the support will be within the following areas: -

- Assistance with travel to College or Work Placement.
- Assistance with books, equipment, specialist clothing, educational visits etc.
- Assistance with childcare costs (learners aged over 20).

- Free school meals for those eligible in line with ESFA regulations.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-free-meals-advice-for-fe-institutions>

Students can apply for financial support by completing the appropriate application form. The level of support is based on income, age and specific circumstances.

Application Forms can be obtained from Student Services.

Students attending Higher Education programmes which are directly funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (OFS) may apply for financial support through the "ALF" Access to Learning Fund.

Application Forms can be obtained from Student Services.



Higher Education Refund and Compensation Policy (Non-Continuation of Study)

Sandwell College has developed this policy setting out the circumstances in which the College will refund tuition fees and other relevant costs to students and provide compensation where necessary if the College is unable to provide continuation of study for one or more students on its higher education programmes. The risk that this may occur has been assessed, through the Student Protection Plan, as unlikely. However, if it were to occur then any affected students should receive a refund of fees and appropriate compensation.

This policy covers programmes that the College has terminated or intends to terminate and does not include changes or termination of programmes where all registered students would have been expected to have completed their programme by the termination date. Refund and compensation plans will be based on the relevant guidance published by the Office for Students and/or the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education.

On Programme Termination

A programme termination is defined as a termination when the College has to terminate a programme before the expected programme end date. If this was to occur the College will communicate with all affected students individually and the will:

- ensure students receive a Pearson unit certificate of achievement which recognises achievement to date.
- provide the Pearson student registration number, which would support possible continuation at another provider;
- offer students advice and guidance on transfer to another College programme or transfer to a suitable alternative provider to complete their programme of study;



- create a student specific refund and compensation plan that includes a refund of tuition fees and compensation in respect of additional costs reasonably incurred by students as a result of programme termination or change of programme;
- ensure that any student who receives a bursary and would have continued to receive the bursary had the programme not been terminated receives the remainder of that bursary whether the student transfers to another College programme, or to the same programme at an alternative provider.

Refund

Refund includes:

- Tuition fee loan from the Student Loans Company
- Tuition fee paid by the student;
- Tuition fee paid by a sponsor;
- Travel costs as a result of relocation

Compensation

Compensation includes:

- Maintenance costs;
- Lost time;
- Additional tuition costs;
- Travel costs as a result of relocation.

Payments

Refunds will be made to the account holder's bank (or other financial institution) that originally paid the tuition fee (Student Loans Company, sponsor or student). Refunds will not be paid in cash.

General

Any queries regarding the application of this policy should be addressed to enquiries@sandwell.ac.uk