



## **College Tuition Fees Policy**

**2023-24**

<b>Policy</b>	College Tuition Fees Policy
<b>Approval</b>	Corporation Board
<b>Date</b>	July 2023
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<b>Responsibility</b>	Executive Director of Finance & Resource

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## **Policy Statement**

The College sets full and part-time vocational course fees taking into account the guidance given by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA)

The expectation is that the tuition fee is 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 relevant section of the policy.

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/ WMCA funded)**

### **Eligibility**

Learner eligibility for ESFA and West Midlands Combined Authority funded courses is assessed in line with the ESFA Funding Guidance 2023-24 and any additional guidance issued by the WMCA. Not all courses fall within the ESFA/WMCA funding criteria. For the funded courses, learners are 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.

Detailed eligibility criteria can be found at:

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/sfa-funding-rates>

<https://www.wmca.org.uk/what-we-do/productivity-skills/adult-education-budget/>

## Tuition and Examination Fees

If a learner fulfils the eligibility criteria for funding in line with ESFA and WMCA Funding Guidance 2023-24 and is assessed as a Home Student, the fee requirements detailed below will apply.

### **16–18-year-old learners**

Any 16–18-year-old learner eligible for state funding will be fully funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency.

Fee Type	Cost
Tuition Fees	None apply
Initial Examination Fees	None apply
Other mandatory course fees (i.e. equipment, materials etc.)	None apply
Registration fees to professional bodies (i.e. AAT)	None apply

### **19+ learners (excluding learners subject to 19+ Advanced Learning Loans)**

Depending on their age and personal circumstances they will either be:

1. Fully funded – the ESFA/WMCA will fully fund the cost of their course of study
2. Co-funded – the ESFA/WMCA will fund part of the course and the learner (or employer) will be expected to pay the balance.

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

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/sfa-funding-rates>

<https://www.wmca.org.uk/what-we-do/productivity-skills/adult-education-budget/>

Fee Type	Cost	
	Fully Funded Learner	Co-funded Learner
Tuition Fees	None apply	Published fee set by the college in line with ESFA/WMCA rules.
Initial Examination Fees	None apply	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 professional bodies (i.e. AAT)	Paid for by learner or, if learner is eligible, via the Discretionary Learner Support fund (LSF)	Paid for by learner directly to professional body

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, mandatory materials etc.).

Students who choose to pay the full cost of the course independently must agree to 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 will take any necessary 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**

There are no directly funded HE courses running in 2023-24.

Fees for any franchised HE courses, where applicable will be in line with HE partner's fees and tuition policy.



## **Students of Compulsory School Age**

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

Admission to college is subject to:

1. Agreement, in writing, of the learner's 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.

Enrolment documentation and Learner Agreements must clearly identify any students under 16 years 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.

Price of full cost provision is dependent on type of course, level of course, mode of delivery, materials required, teaching costs, market forces and may differ from course to course.

## **Apprenticeships**

Apprenticeships starting on or after 1st May 2017 are subject to Government rules around financial contributions.

There are no charges to apprentices. 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. The agreement will be set out prior to the start of the 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/government/collections/sfa-funding-rates>

## **Changes to Fees**

**Fees can be amended during the academic year only 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 Executive Director of Finance and Resources.

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

For students who have already paid their fees prior to them being amended, the following will apply: -

- **Fee reductions – the difference will be refunded, on request**
- **Fee increases – no additional charge will be made**

## **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.*

All fees must be paid in full before the competition of the programme of study.

## **Receipts**

A college receipt for any payment made must be issued to all students, immediately

## Examination Fees

All students who need to pay for their examination fees will be subject to a **late entry fee of £25** if they fail to submit their examination entry fee by the college deadlines. If they miss the awarding body deadlines they will also be charged the awarding body late entry fee (which varies depending on the organisation or qualification)

## Examination Resit Fees

The table below shows the entitlement to resits and associated charges

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

*\*In response to Wolf report*

## **Refunds**

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

- The programme is cancelled by the college
- The student withdraws at least 2 weeks prior to the course commencement (start date).

**Note: - The Executive Director of Finance and Resources can in exceptional circumstances approve a refund.**

Where a student has applied for a refund at least 2 weeks 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 (which will be deducted at source)

Where a student transfers to another course of a lower value and the student has paid a in full a refund may be made for the difference in value excluding an administration fee of £25.00.

Where a student transfers to another course of a higher value the student will be responsible for the higher fees.

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

Where an additional fee has been included and paid at enrolment e.g., materials, visits etc, then this can be refunded with prior approval by a relevant senior manager. The refunded amount should be adjusted to reflect the use/benefits received to date.

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

## **Staff Development Courses**

Staff development/CPD is available to all staff employed by the college with prior approval by their line manager and Human Resources (HR).

Applications should be made and approved, using official documentation. .

The request should be made by the member of staff on the appropriate form and should be forwarded to their line manager in the first instance.

All staff development/CPD must be approved by HR and Finance prior to enrolment, attendance, or payment of the course/conference fees. Tuition fees for in-house courses may be supported by the staff development budget.

For in-house staff development/CPD approval evidence must be shown at the time of enrolment. Without this approval staff will be charged in full.



## **Financial Support for Students**

**The college operates financial support schemes e.g., Learner Support Funds. in order to provide assistance to:**

- Full and part-time students over the age of 16 and following a further education (FE) programme of study funded by the ESFA/WMCA.

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

- Assistance with travel to college or Work placement.
- Assistance with books, mandatory equipment, specialist/protective clothing, educational visits etc.?? I am not sure if we should remove educational visits from this policy.
- Assistance with tuition fees
- 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 only apply for financial support by completing the appropriate application form(s). The level of support can be based on household income, age and/or specific circumstances.

Application forms can be obtained from Student Services.

Any queries regarding this policy should be addressed to [enquiries@sandwell.ac.uk](mailto:enquiries@sandwell.ac.uk)