



Fees Policy 2018/19 to 2020/21

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This document which applies to the 18/19 academic year sets out the Fees Strategy and Policy to be adopted for the 2019/20 and 2020/21 academic years and has been developed in accordance with national/statutory guidance in relation to education and funding, including that published by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). It also sets a framework for ensuring that comprehensive guidance and information regarding fees for courses is available and accessible to customers, prospective and current students and staff.
- 1.2 Any subsequent amendments to this policy will require the approval of the Corporate Services Committee. It is expected that this will only happen in the event of any significant change in Government Policy.

2. Further Education (ESFA) funded courses

- 2.1 The ESFA funding approach assumes that all students other than those eligible for full fee remission are charged a tuition fee as a contribution towards the costs of their learning. For 2018/19 onwards the ESFA's assumed fee income remains at 50% of the funding value for the learning aim, where the learner is not in receipt of full fee remission.
- 2.2 The values of ESFA approved courses are published on the Learning Aims System. The College will ensure that no tuition/exam/registration charges are made to any student eligible for fee remission and fees for other learners are set at 50% of the funding value, plus a 10% charge towards exam/registration fees. For Full Time students, the fixed rate fee for 18/19 is £1495 rising to £1595 in 19/20 and to £1695 in 20/21.

3. Advanced Learning Loans

- 3.1 There is no public funding of Level 3+ courses (non-apprenticeships) for those aged 19 and above at the start of their programme, with the exception of those aged 19-23 studying their first full level 3 qualification. Other students wishing to study level 3+ courses may be eligible for Advanced Learner Loans.
- 3.2 The loan amount is set at 100% of the ESFA published funding rate for each qualification. Students not wishing to enter into a loan agreement will be liable for payment of the relevant course fee – it is proposed that a 10% discount be offered to those who pay the fee in full at the point of enrolment.
- 3.3 Where fees are covered by an Advanced Learning Loan the student must ensure that they have applied for a loan before the start of the course and at the latest by no later than the end of week 3. Failure to provide evidence of loan eligibility will result in withdrawal from the course if no other means of payment are made.

4. Apprenticeships

- 4.1 The funding system for apprentices changed significantly on 1 May 2017 with the introduction of a 0.5% levy for large employers with a pay bill in excess of £3 million which then creates a 'levy fund' for the employer to pay for apprenticeship training. For 'non

levy' employers apprentices are co-funded by the ESFA in the ratio of 90% from the ESFA with the remaining 10% collected from the employer which is expected to change to 95/5 ratio.

- 4.2 The actual level of payments or ESFA funding and fees required from the employer, will be determined from the 'funding band' attached to the framework or standard. A costings template is used to identify all applicable costs with the final agreed 'price' confirmed by the Business Development Team.

5. Higher Education

- 5.1 The Full Time fee for 18/19 19/20 and 20/21 will be £5995 per year with students paying the same rate for each subsequent year of their programme. The Part Time fee is £3000 per year with the provision to moderate it if exceptional circumstances apply.
- 5.2 Where students withdraw from their programme, we align our charges with guidance from Student Finance England, as follows:

Week of withdrawal		Corresponding dates in 18-19	Percentage of annual tuition fees due
Start date – week 5	Term 1	17/9/18 – 28/10/18 (including half-term week)	0%
Week 6 to Week 13 (and through the Christmas break)	Term 1	29/10/18 – 6/1/19	25%
Week 14 to week 25 (and through the Easter break)	Term 2	07/01/19 – 21/4/19	50%
Week 26 onwards	Term 3	22/04/19 onwards	100%

- 5.3 In addition to the refunds policy outlined in 5.2, it is a requirement of the Office for Students that the College has a Student Protection Plan in place – a copy is attached at Annex A

6. Full Cost/Commercial Programmes

- 6.1 Fees for commercial courses will be priced at a level to reflect the full price to the College and set at a level the market will bear. The underlying principle is that all programmes should cover their direct costs as a minimum and make a contribution towards overheads.

7. Payment of Fees

- 7.1 In general all fees are payable in full at the point of enrolment, however, the College offers a payment instalment plan provided the fee is in excess of £100. Payments will be accepted in cash, cheque, credit and debit card. Students whose employers have agreed to pay their fees must produce a letter from their employer, at the time of enrolment, confirming that the employer will cover the full costs of the course.

8. Approval Process

- 8.1 All fees proposed by Curriculum Managers will be reviewed and approved by the Director of Finance or Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality.

9. Fee Refunds/Withdrawals

- 9.1 The College will refund all fees that have been paid, in full, where a course has been cancelled by the College or if a student decides not to take up a place
- 9.2 A student withdrawing from an ESFA funded programme will be eligible for a full refund of fees where they have attended no more than 3 sessions of the course (a session is defined as attendance on any given day of the course) or enrol but are unable to take up their place. For full cost/commercial courses, no refund of fees will be provided where a student starts then leaves the course.
- 9.3 In exceptional circumstances a fee refund will be considered where students have attended beyond 3 sessions. All requests must be submitted in writing to the Funding & Data Manager or Financial Controller within 1 month of their last attendance on the course and must include certified medical evidence or other documentary evidence.
- 9.4 Appeals against refund decisions may be made to the Deputy Principal: Operations/Finance Director and must be made within 1 month of the original decision.



Higher Education Compensation and Refunds Process

The College is committed to protecting the consumer rights of students and ensuring that they receive the education to which they are entitled according to the terms of their contract with the College. The protection includes the approach taken to compensation and refunds.

Refund of fees

Gateshead College is committed to supporting all students to ensure they reach their full potential and achieve their programme of study. The risk that we may need to close any of our programmes in an unplanned way is very low, however, situations and events beyond the college's control may occur resulting in changes to individual modules or whole programmes of study. The college will take all reasonable steps to avoid making significant changes to provision at the start of the academic year or during an academic year.

In the unlikely event that a course of study does not meet the standards agreed and expected, a student may apply for a refund of all or part of any tuition fees paid. Students may also apply for a refund of any additional costs associated with the course of study that they were expected to pay as a condition of enrolment.

Where the College can demonstrate that the partial completion of prior stages was not the fault of the College any refund would be reviewed and the College may deduct a proportion of any payment. This deductions would be explained to the student.

Compensation

In the unlikely that the College was unable to continue delivery of a programme or action taken significantly alters the approach to delivery which leads to students incurring additional or unnecessary costs, the college would consider financial compensation for those students affected. This may include:

- Compensation for tuition and maintenance costs where students have to transfer to another course or provider
- Payment of any additional travel costs for students affected by a change in the location of their course

Applications for Refunds and Compensation

If a student believes that they are entitled to receive a refund or compensation, the following steps should be followed:

Stage	Process	Timescale
-------	---------	-----------

Stage 1 – Initial enquiry	Applications for refunds or compensation should be addressed to the Funding & Data Manager or Financial Controller in writing or via email. The College will aim to make decisions within 15 working days following receipt of the application and will keep students informed in the event that additional time is required. All decisions will be confirmed in writing and any refunds actioned within 5 working days.	Applications to be submitted within 10 working days of any concern
Stage 2 – Appeal	If the student is dissatisfied with the decision of the Funding & Data Manger or Financial Controlled, they should submit a formal letter or appeal to the Deputy Principal: Operations/Finance Director within 15 working days. This will trigger a full review of the case involving the appropriate Assistant Principal.	15 working days
Stage 3 -	<p>If a student is not satisfied with the College's final decision a complaint can be made to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA). The details of how to appeal are found on http://oiahe.org.uk/making-a-complaint-to-the-oia/how-to-make-a-complaint.aspx and the contact details are;</p> <p>OIA Second Floor Abbey Gate 57 – 75 Kings Road READING RG1 3AB Tel: 0118 959 9813 E-form: https://oiahe.org.uk/contact-us/e-form.aspx Email enquiries@oiahe.org.uk</p>	In accordance with OIA schedule