



Tuition Fee Policy 2026/2027

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Monitor Changes

Version Level	Details of Change	Date
01	Policy drafted for 2023-24	February 2023
02	Minimal amends for 2024-25. No changes to the fees set out within the document.	February 2024
03	Addition of references to the North East Combined Authority, change in term from Adult Education Budget to Adult Skills Budget, updated links, additional section relating to Skills Bootcamps.	February 2025
04	Removed all references to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), amending to Department for Education (DfE). Removed references to Adult Skills Budget (ASB), replacing with Adult Skills Fund (ASF).	April 2026

Key search words for this document

Tuition Fees, Fees, Further Education, Free Courses for Jobs, Advanced Learners Loans, Apprenticeships, Higher Education, Full Cost Programmes, Payment Methods, Approval Process, Refunds

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Contents

1. Introduction	3
2. Further Education (DfE funded provision for students aged 16-18 and students with learning difficulties or disabilities aged 19 to 24 who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP))	4
3. Further Education (DfE/NECA Adult Skills Budget (ASB) funded provision for students aged 19+).....	4
4. Free Courses for Jobs	Error! Bookmark not defined.
5. Advanced Learner Loans	4
6. Apprenticeships	5
7. Higher Education	5
8. Skills Bootcamps.....	5
9. Full Cost Programmes	6
10. Payment Methods	6
11. Approval Process	6
12. Refunds.....	6
13. Detailed guidance	7

Tuition Fee Policy 2026/2027

1. Introduction

- 1.1 This policy sets out the high-level principles that Gateshead College will apply to the setting of tuition fees for the 2026/27 academic year.
- 1.2 The Tuition Fee Policy to be adopted for the 2026/27 academic year has been developed in accordance with relevant national, local and statutory guidance in relation to education and funding, including that published by the Department for Education (DfE) and the North East Combined Authority (NECA) It also sets a framework for ensuring that comprehensive guidance and information regarding fees for courses is available and accessible to learners and staff.
- 1.3 Learners are enrolled at Gateshead College on the basis that they are either:
 - (i) Self-financed i.e. paying their own fees
 - (ii) Sponsored by an employer or other official body
 - (iii) Entitled to fee remission i.e. free tuition. The DfE/NECA refer to such learners as 'fully funded'.
 - (iv) A combination of (i), (ii) and (iii). The DfE/NECA refer to such learners as 'co-funded'.
- 1.4 Self-financing and co-funded learners are required to pay all course fees or take out an Advanced Learner Loan to fund their fees as a condition of enrolment.
- 1.5 Enrolments will be accepted on the basis of a sponsorship where a learner's sponsor provides written agreement to the College's terms and conditions. In the event of default by a sponsor or failure by the sponsor to provide written agreement to the College's terms and conditions, the learner will become liable for all outstanding fees.
- 1.6 Learners applying for fee remission must produce relevant documentation as stipulated by fee remission guidelines at the time of enrolment. Where learners fail to produce such documentation an invoice for the full course fee will be issued.
- 1.7 It is the responsibility of the learner to ensure that all fees are paid either by themselves or their sponsor. Fees remain payable in the event of withdrawal by the learner from the College. The College reserves the right to cancel a learner's enrolment if any relevant fees are not paid on the due date(s) and to withdraw them from the course. In addition to this, the College reserves the right to not enrol learners who have a previous debt outstanding. Any part payment of fees by a learner would be forfeited in these circumstances. The College reserves the right to take legal action to recover outstanding amounts.
- 1.8 As part of the enrolment process, all learners will sign a declaration that confirms their acceptance of the College's terms and conditions which include clauses relating to the payment of fees.
- 1.9 Gateshead College has a range of support funds and bursaries to support learners in meeting the costs of study including travel, uniforms, kit, trips and visits, college meals and childcare. Further information is available [here](#)

2. Further Education (DfE funded provision for students aged 16-18 and students with learning difficulties or disabilities aged 19 to 24 who have an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP))

- 2.1 In accordance with DfE conditions of funding Gateshead College will not charge tuition or examination fees for learners aged 16-18 on the 31 August 2026. This applies to learners meeting the DfE's funding eligibility criteria for young people without exception. Remission of fees extends to 19 year old students continuing the same study programme recorded in their learning agreement into a second or subsequent year. Gateshead College will not charge tuition or examination fees for learners with learning difficulties or disabilities aged 19 to 24 who have an EHCP. Detailed guidance on eligibility is provided [here](#)

3. Further Education (DfE/NECA Adult Skills Fund (ASF) funded provision for students aged 19+)

- 3.1 ESFA/NECA ASF funding rules assume that all students other than those classified as fully funded are charged a tuition fee as a contribution towards the costs of their learning. In accordance with the funding rules, Gateshead College will not charge fees to learners classified as fully funded subject to the provision of the appropriate evidence at enrolment.
- 3.2 Learners eligible for ASF funding but not fully funded are classified as co-funded. A fee for co-funded ASF learners is calculated as 50% of the unweighted funding value for the learning aim plus a 10% charge for examination and registration fees. Fees will be calculated as part of the College's curriculum and business planning process.
- 3.3 Course fees for individual courses may be varied at the request of the Head of Department subject to approval by the Executive Team during the curriculum and business planning process.
- 3.4 Funding values for ESFA funded courses are published on the DfE's [Find a learning aim](#) webpage.

4. Free Courses for Jobs

- 4.1 In accordance with [national guidance](#) Gateshead College will not charge a tuition fee for eligible adult learners studying an eligible qualification at level 3 or above who do not meet the criteria for AEB funding.

5. Advanced Learner Loans

- 5.1 Learners aged 19+ who are ineligible for the support described in paragraph 4.1 may be eligible for an Advanced Learner Loan to pay the tuition fee for their course. The fee to be covered by the loan will be set at 100% of the ESFA published funding rate for the relevant qualification.
- 5.2 It is the responsibility of the learner to enter into an agreement with the Student Loans Company and secure a loan to pay for their course. Gateshead College will offer support and guidance to the learner to undertake the loan application.
- 5.3 Learners ineligible for a loan or not wishing to enter into a loan agreement will be liable for payment of the relevant course fee calculated as described in section 5.1. It is proposed that a 10% discount be offered to those who pay the fee in full at the point of enrolment.

- 5.4 Funding values for ESFA funded courses are published on the ESFA's [Find a learning aim](#) webpage.

6. Apprenticeships

- 6.1 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 aged 16–18, or aged 19–24 with an education, health and care plan, the government pays 100% of training costs.
- 6.2 The actual level of payments of DfE funding and fees required from the employer, will be determined from the 'funding band' attached to the apprenticeship standard, together with the outcome of the individual skills scan for each apprentice. A costings template is used to identify all applicable costs and to agree the final price.

7. Higher Education

- 7.1 The Full-Time fee is proposed to remain at £5,995 per year, with learners paying the same rate for each subsequent year of their programme. The Part Time fee is proposed at £3,500 per year with the provision to moderate it if exceptional circumstances apply. The College will charge an intermediate rate of £4,500 for hybrid, fast-track day release provision for employer sponsored HE students. These fees apply to learners paying for themselves, paying via a Student Loan and for those being sponsored by an employer.
- 7.2 Where learners withdraw from their programme, the College will collect fees according to the number of weeks of attendance in line with guidance from Student Finance England.

8. Skills Bootcamps

- 8.1 **Fully Funded Learners:** Skills Bootcamps are fully-funded for eligible adults aged 19 or above on 31 August 2026 who are independent of their current employer, or self-employed, or unemployed. To qualify for full-funding, learners must sign a learning agreement which stipulates that they intend to use the Skills Bootcamp to progress into a new role or gain new work relevant to the Skills Bootcamp. Prior to the offer of a fully-funded place on a Skills Bootcamp, learners must confirm that they will engage in relevant activity including action plan, job applications, interviews and job search for a minimum 6 months past their end date and will provide evidence of this activity and any resulting job offers or additional work/contracts.
- 8.2 **Co-Funded Learners:** Learners who are employees referred by their current employer are classified as co-funded. There is no charge to the learner, however their employer must agree to payment of co-funding prior to the commencement of the agreed Skills Bootcamp (employer fee). To be eligible for co-funding, the employer must agree in writing that, on completion of the Skills Bootcamp, there is an identified and defined progression opportunity for each member of their co-funded staff. The employer must agree that, following the Skills Bootcamp, they will provide an update confirming whether the planned progression has taken place, the nature of the progression and the date from which it applied.

The employer fee is calculated as 30% of the agreed Skills Bootcamp unit cost per person for large employers, reduced to 10% of the Skills Bootcamp unit cost per person for SME employers. As the unit cost for different Skills Bootcamps varies, a

fee quotation will be provided to the employer based on the number of learners, the co-funding percentage applicable, and the unit rate of the chosen Skills Bootcamp/s. The employer must accept the quotation in writing. Gateshead College will then request a contractual agreement / purchase order / purchase agreement (this may be employer specific).

Gateshead College will submit an invoice to the employer for all co-funded learners who are on the agreed Skills Bootcamp at milestone 1 (defined as reaching 10 Guided Learning Hours). Gateshead College payment terms will apply.

Gateshead College will not invoice for early withdrawals (prior to 10 Guided Learning Hours) where there is a genuine reason for withdrawal provided by the learner / their employer. Gateshead College reserves the right to charge an administrative fee of 50% of the employer fee per learner for early withdrawals without due reason, or for cancellation of employer co-funded cohorts without due notice.

9. Full Cost Programmes

9.1 Fees for commercial courses will be priced at a level to reflect the full cost 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.

10. Payment Methods

10.1 Payments will be accepted in cash, cheque, credit and debit card, and by instalments provided the fee is a minimum of £100.

11. Approval Process

11.1 Any fees that are proposed which do not follow the approach outlined above must be reviewed and approved. Approval requires a robust rationale, with appropriate record retained for audit purposes. Approval is required by one of, the Deputy Principal Finance and Resources, Deputy Principal Curriculum & Quality or the Director of Curriculum and Skills.

12. Refunds

12.1 A learner withdrawing from a full year DfE/NECA funded programme will be eligible for a refund as shown in the table below.

Week of withdrawal	Percentage of annual tuition fees due
Start date to teaching week 5	0%
Week 6 to teaching week 13	25%
Week 14 to week 25	50%
Week 26 onwards	100%

- 12.2 Learners on shorter courses will be eligible for a pro-rata refund provided they have attended less than 50% of the course duration. Where an apprentice withdraws from their course and the employer has paid the fee contribution, a pro-rata refund will be provided in accordance with the DfE payment profile.
- 12.3 In exceptional circumstances a fee refund will also be considered where learners have had to withdraw due to reasons outside of their control. All requests must be submitted in writing to the Funding & Data Manager or Financial Controller and must include certified medical evidence or other documentary evidence.
- 12.4 Where a course is cancelled by the College or times and/or fees and/or days change to such an extent that a learner's attendance becomes impossible, the learner or the sponsor will receive a full refund.

13. Detailed guidance

- 13.1 Detailed guidance on the eligibility of a learner for remission from fees in 2026/27 will be added to the College's website and intranet following publication of the relevant funding body guidance.