

Course Fees Policy

2023/2024

Review Cycle:	Annually
Next Review Date:	March 2024
Person Responsible:	Group Executive Director of Finance and Resources
Approving Body:	Group Board

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Heart of Yorkshire Group's approach to setting and collecting course fees and associated charges is reviewed on an annual basis. The course fees policy has a major impact on the educational character of the College and is therefore approved by the Governing Body.
- 1.2. The approach of the Group to recovering fees for further education courses is largely dictated by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and the West Yorkshire Combined Authority (WYCA).
- 1.3. The approach of the Group to setting fees and bursaries for higher education courses is subject to the approval of the Office for Students (OfS).

2. Objectives

- 2.1. This policy seeks to ensure that:
 - the Group's approach to course and additional fees is fair, equitable and clear;
 - any barriers to participation presented by course fees and associated charges are mitigated by providing flexible payment options and/or by assisting learners to access appropriate financial support;
 - the Group can respond flexibly to market forces and government policy, including fee guidance issued by the ESFA, WYCA and the OfS;
 - the Group generates a proportion of overall income from non-publicly funded sources;
 - all obligations in respect of payment of fees are clearly shown.

3. General Principles

- 3.1. Learners or their sponsors, unless they qualify for exemptions or waivers, are to be charged:
 - a course fee;
 - the cost of any equipment necessary to undertake their programme of study if this equipment will remain the property of the learner once the course has been completed;
 - the cost of any trips or visits associated with the programme of study;
 - the cost of any examination re-sits, where appropriate;
 - the cost of any charges imposed by awarding organisations (e.g. re-marking, requests for scripts).
- 3.2. Classroom based learners are ultimately responsible for ensuring that their fees are paid, even when a third party (e.g. an employer, SLC) intends to pay on their behalf.
- 3.3. All course fees (or deposits and payment plans) are due at enrolment.
- 3.4. Instalment arrangements are available if certain criteria are met and payments are made by Direct Debit.
- 3.5. No course fees are payable by 16–18 year old Further Education learners, including those on part time programmes, or by adult learners who meet the specified criteria in Appendix 1. All other fees would be payable if applicable.
- 3.6. Where courses are for more than one year, published course fees are for the full duration of the course unless it is for a HE course which are charged annually, or otherwise stated.
- 3.7. Some of our courses are not subsidised by our funding bodies; therefore, course fees are payable as published in the prospectus for these courses, regardless of age or circumstances of learner.
- 3.8. Fee concessions and the fee rate payable may be subject to learner age, previous qualifications, residency status in the UK and the course. Further details can be found here <https://www.wakefield.ac.uk/study-with-us/fees-and-money-matters/>
- 3.9. Learners seeking a reduction or waiver of course fees under these policies must produce documentary evidence of their entitlement, at enrolment.

- 3.10. In order for a learner to be eligible for Government funding for their learning programme the learner must have the legal right to be resident in the UK at the start of their programme. There should also be a reasonable likelihood that the learner will be able to complete their programme of study.
- 3.11. A learner's course fee status at enrolment (eg employed, in receipt of eligible benefit) applies throughout the duration of the learning aim.
- 3.12. Learners are directly responsible for registration with (and payment to) any relevant Professional Bodies.
- 3.13. The full course fee is payable even if the learner decides not to complete the course.
- 3.14. Fees for courses over 12 weeks duration will include a free 'taster' period and no fee will be charged for attendance up to this point. (For FE courses this is two weeks; for HE courses this is one week).

4. Further Education Course Fees: Learners Aged Under 16

- 4.1. The Group does not receive ESFA funding for learners aged under 16 who are on a school roll and participate in part-time School Link (Step Up) programmes or the full time Early College Transfer (ECT) scheme. Schools pay the Group directly for this provision.

5. Further Education Course Fees: Learners Aged 16-18

- 5.1. Although the Group is prohibited from charging 16-18 year old learners any course fees in respect of Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) funded FE courses, other costs will be charged as detailed in section 3.1.

6. Loan Eligible Courses for FE Learners Aged 19-23

- 6.1. Whether the Group receives ESFA or WYCA funding or not for 19-23 year-old learners on level 3 FE courses (including Access to HE courses and A Levels) depends on a learner's prior attainment.
- 6.2. The Group receives full funding for some level 3 courses if a learner does not already have a full level 3. Learners without a previous full level 3 will have their course fees remitted if the course is eligible.
- 6.3. The Group does not receive funding for level 3 courses if a learner already has a level 3; learners with a previous full level 3 will need to pay course fees or apply for an Advanced Learner Loan (ALL).
- 6.4. The Group does not receive funding for any learners aged 19-23 on higher level FE courses (levels 4-6). All learners on these courses will need to pay course fees directly or apply for an Advanced Learner Loan (ALL).

7. Loan Eligible Courses for FE Learners Aged 24+

- 7.1. The Group does not receive funding for any learners aged 24 and over on most advanced or higher level FE courses (levels 3-6), including Access to HE courses and A Levels. All 24+ learners on these courses will need to pay course fees or apply for an Advanced Learner Loan.

8. Fully Funded Courses for FE Learners Aged 19+

- 8.1 During 2023/24 a limited number of advanced level FE courses (level 3) will be available on a fully funded basis for eligible learners aged 19+. Funded fee remission for eligible courses will be determined by either the ESFA or WYCA.

9. Advanced Learner Loans - General

- 9.1 Learners aged 19 or over by 31 August 2023 can apply for an Advanced Learner Loan, via Student Finance England, to pay their course fees. The loan is available for eligible courses only (e.g. Level 3 Awards are not in the scope of Advanced Learner Loans).
- 9.2 All learners who wish to apply for an Advanced Learner Loan will need to apply for the full value of the loan they require for the duration of their course.
- 9.3 Where a learner elects to pay course fees via an Advanced Learner Loan and then withdraws early from the course, their monthly loan payments to the Group will cease. In addition to the learner being liable to the Student Loan Company (SLC) for the amount of loan payment made, the balance of course fees also remains due and payable by the learner directly to the Group.
- 9.4 Learners will be informed prior to their enrolment of their course fee obligations upon withdrawal via their 'Learning and Funding Information' letter.
- 9.5 Advanced Learner Loans are available to pay course fees only. Any additional fees that are not mandatory for the course (e.g. visits) or any materials that the student chooses to retain (e.g. hair and beauty equipment) will be charged directly to the learner during the year as necessary.
- 9.6 Advanced Learner Loan students may be able to access the Group's bursary fund for support, e.g. with travel costs. Students' applications are considered on an individual basis by the Group's Financial Support Team.
- 9.7 Any learner without an approved loan at enrolment will be required to pay a deposit of £150 towards their course fee. Deposits will be refunded once a loan has been approved and the Group has received three monthly loan instalments. Deposits will not be refunded if a learner withdraws from their course or fails to obtain a loan. Evidence of a loan application is not sufficient to avoid paying the deposit. Staff should encourage applicants to apply in advance for their loan.

- 9.8 Any student who has not been successful in obtaining a loan, on an eligible course, who then fails to make, or is unable to make, alternative payment arrangements will not be permitted to continue with the course. They will also be held liable for the full course fee.
- 9.9 Early withdrawals: students who withdraw from their course early will enter 'repayment status' with SLC from the 6 April following their withdrawal date. This means that they may be required to commence repayment of their loan from this date.
- 9.10 Students on 'Access to HE' courses are only able to secure a loan **once**. Early withdrawal on these courses may prevent any further loan opportunity and prevent access to Higher Education in the future.

10. Progression Students

- 10.1 Continuing learners who are under 19 on 31 August will normally have their course fee automatically remitted by the ESFA. Where this is not the case, the learner will be expected to pay the full course fee.

11. Group Discretionary Fee Remission

- 11.1 The Group holds a limited fund for discretionary course fee remission and may offer support to learners who are on low incomes but do not qualify for automatic fee remission. Household income thresholds apply.
- 11.2 Student applications are considered on an individual basis by the Group's Financial Support Team.

12. Bespoke Employer Courses

- 12.1 Payment for such courses are due in advance.

13. Apprenticeships

- 13.1 Course fees and payment terms for apprentices are as contracted with Individual employers (SMEs and Apprenticeship Levy payers).
- 13.2 The Employer pays course fees to the Group as detailed in the agreed Contract.
- 13.3 Invoices will be issued individually for each apprentice.
- 13.4 For employers with a digital account, funds will be paid to the Group on a monthly basis after the employer has registered the apprentice on the Digital Apprentice Service (DAS).
- 13.5 Where there are insufficient DAS funds available to pay any fees due, the employer will pay a 5% contribution through the period of shortfall.

- 13.6 For employers paying a contribution towards ESFA funded training costs, the following payment options are available:
- Course fees can be paid in full on receipt of invoice.
 - For course fees up to and including £499, payment must be in full on receipt of invoice.
 - For course fees £500 or greater, payment can be made over a maximum of 12 equal monthly Direct Debits. The final instalment must be received at least 3 months before the planned end date of the course.

14. Higher Education Course Fees

- 14.1 The Group receives no funding to cover the costs of HE teaching and will recover the cost of teaching through setting an appropriate course fee which will be charged to the student.
- 14.2 The Group offers Higher Education learners the facility to pay by instalments, although most learners elect to apply for a student loan to cover their course fees.
- 14.3 The Group has a separate HE Compensation Policy. Which should be referred to in a case by case basis, as required.

15 Higher Education Full Time and Part Time Fees for Students

- 15.1 Both returning students and new entrants in 2023 will be charged £6,950 per 120 credits full time and pro-rata of the equivalent full time course fee for part time (based on academic credits studied).
- 15.2 Students starting higher national certificates in construction are outside the scope of the 2023/24 OfS Agreement and for these programmes of study, the equivalent full-time course fee remains at £6,000 for 2023/24.
- 15.3 The fees detailed may be subject to review in exceptional circumstances by reference to the Director of Higher Education or Executive Director Finance & Resources.
- 15.4 Subject to Office for Students (OfS) agreement, the Group will be awarding scholarships and bursaries to eligible students starting in academic year 2023/24

16 International Fees

- 16.1 Heart of Yorkshire Group's international students are those who are sponsored by the Group to travel to the UK, from a different country, with a General student visa (Student Route) to study in the UK.
- 16.2 All international students will be expected to pay a deposit of 50% of their course fee before the College issues a Certificate of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) and pay the remaining balance of their first year fees

in full before the commencement of their course. Any variations to this must be authorised by the Principal or Executive Director Finance & Resources.

- 16.3 International Students' course fees for 2023/24 for full time programmes vary according to the programme of study:
- A Levels, Level 3 Diplomas and EFL - £9,500 per year of study
 - Higher Education - £10,000 per year of study
- 16.4 The College will charge £7,060 for each student enrolling on a one year Advanced level programme of study, through the EF High School Exchange Year scheme
- 16.5 International students' course fees will be deemed to include a non-refundable administration fee of 20% of the deposit. This will be deducted from any refund where a student is unsuccessful in obtaining a visa and provides written evidence to support their claim.
- 16.6 EU students joining a Higher Education programme in 2023-24, through the Student visa route, will be eligible for a scholarship of £1,500 for each year of study.

17 Overseas Fees

- 17.1 If a student does not meet ESFA criteria for Residency eligibility they will be charged £13.00 per hour for an FE course or £20.00 per hour for an HE course. The minimum course fees charged to an overseas student should be the course fees for a home student and the maximum fees should be the course fees for an International student.

18 Payment of Course Fees and Instalments

- 18.1 All course fees become payable on the completion of an enrolment form either by the learner or by a sponsor unless the learner is entitled to full fee remission. Payment of course fees may be made by cash, card and in the case of instalments, by deposit and monthly direct debit.
- 18.2 Where the total course fee is less than £150 learners must pay in full at the time of enrolment.
- 18.3 Where the course duration is 12 weeks or fewer (i.e. short courses), learners must pay in full at the time of enrolment.

- 18.4 Where the total course fee is £150 or more, and the course is 13 weeks or more in duration, learners can pay a deposit at enrolment followed by equal monthly instalments. The amount of the deposit and the number of instalments available will vary depending on the value of the course:

Value of the course	Payable at enrolment (first instalment)	Payable by Direct Debit (additional instalments)
Note – course duration must be 13 weeks or more for instalments to be available		
Not paying by direct debit	100%	N/A
Up to £149	100%	N/A
£150 to £750	30%	3
£751 to £999	20%	5
£1000 + AND up to 12 months	15%	8
For courses 13 months or more and over £1000	10%	11
HE Courses	15%	8
ESOL courses *	40%	2

*ESOL is exempt from the requirement of a 13 week minimum duration for instalments to be available

- 18.5 Instalments may span academic years, depending on the start date of the course. The instalment option is not available to international students, employers or sponsors.
- 18.6 Where a learner pays a £150 deposit towards an Adult Learner Loan funded course that is awaiting approval, then there is no requirement to complete a Direct Debit form.
- 18.7 Some courses are only funded in part by a loan. In these cases an instalment plan and completed Direct Debit form would be needed to cover fees that remain payable by the student after deducting loan amount.
- 18.8 Where fees are solely for visits, alternative payment plans can be considered based on Group costs incurred to date and on dates of departure.

19 Payment Incentives

- 19.1 The Group offers a 10% prompt payment discount.
- 19.2 The discount is available to students enrolling on an FE course (over £150 and thirteen weeks or more in duration) where the learner

makes payment in full, at the time of enrolment.

- 19.3 The discount is available on the course fee only.
- 19.4 The discount is not available to sponsors, international students or to students who choose to pay fees by an Advanced Learner Loan.
- 19.5 The discount applies to FE course fees only and is not available on HE courses.

20 Unpaid Fees

- 20.1 The Group will use appropriate debt recovery procedures where learners breach the terms of their payment agreement and may exclude such learners from the Group. The Group will also seek to recover any legal and other costs it incurs in recovering unpaid fees.
- 20.2 Learners undertaking a two-year programme will not be allowed to progress to the second year of the course where fees relating to the first year remain unpaid, and learners who complete a programme of study but have fees outstanding will not be allowed to enrol on further programmes of study until any outstanding debt has been cleared.

21 Fee Refunds (General Principles)

- 21.1 Course fee refunds will be approved where the Group has had to cancel a course.
- 21.2 Non-attendance: If a learner withdraws from a course prior to its commencement, a refund will normally be given on request, but the Group reserves the right to recover fees if the refund would affect the course's continuing viability. This includes long courses but excludes 'short' and bespoke courses.
- 21.3 In the case of early withdrawal from a FE course, if a learner withdraws after the two-week taster period, full fees remain payable.
- 21.4 Should the Group be unable to complete the provision, once started, students who have had fees paid on their behalf by the Student Loans Company will have their loan obligation reduced to zero.
- 21.5 All home students' course fees will be deemed to include a non-refundable administration fee of £30.
- 21.6 The Group will not refund fees if it is unable to perform any of its obligations due to causes beyond its reasonable control. This may include but is not limited to: fire, flood, windstorm or other natural disaster, closure due to adverse weather conditions, interruption to or failure of electric power, gas or water, strike, collapse of building structures, failure of machinery, computers or vehicles.

22 Course Fee Refunds (HE)

- 22.1 Where an HE learner elects to pay course fees via a student loan, the SLC will make payments to the Group per term, or part term attended. After the one-week 'taster' period, the SLC will pay the Group as follows: for attendance in term one (25%), for any attendance in term two (25%) and for any attendance in term three (50%).
- 22.2 HE loan students, who withdraw from their course early, will have their loan liability reduced in line with the SLC payment schedule.
- 22.3 HE students paying their own course fees directly, who withdraw from their course early, will have their course fee liability reduced in line with the SLC payment schedule.
- 22.4 Where HE course fees are paid by a sponsor, in the event of learner withdrawal, full fees remain payable after the taster period has elapsed.

23 Course Fee Refunds (Apprenticeships)

- 23.1 Full course fee credit will be approved where a learner has attended between one and five weeks. Attendance in the sixth week will normally incur the full year's course fees. Any apprentice related refunds are at the discretion of the Executive Director - Employer Engagement and Apprenticeships.

24 Deferrals

- 24.1 Where a learner is obliged to withdraw from a course, it may be possible to defer course fees for up to twelve months (if the Head of Curriculum considers this academically appropriate). After this specified period, no further deferral will be considered. All deferrals will be at the discretion of the Executive Director of Finance and Resources.
- 24.2 If a deferred student fails to enrol during the following academic year, the previous year's course fee balance become payable in full.

25 Interpretation of the Policy

- 25.1 The Group recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances in which a certain level of discretion may need to be exercised.
- 25.2 The Group Executive Director of Finance and Resources has the discretion to waive or reduce course fees and/or deposits payable under instalment arrangements having regard to the personal circumstances of individual learners. However, waivers and reductions are unlikely to be given to learners with a previous poor payment

history.

- 25.3 This policy sets out the minimum course fee to be charged for different aspects of the Group curriculum offer. Where appropriate, a higher course fee can be charged at the discretion of the relevant Group Executive Director.

26 Monitoring of the Policy

- 26.1 The policy has been through the Group's Equality Assessment process. The table below explains how this policy will be monitored.

What will be monitored?	How?	By Whom?
Complaints about fees	Analysis of complaints log, by ethnicity, age, gender and disability	Executive Director of Finance and Resources
Fee refunds	Number and value of refunds, by ethnicity, age, gender and disability	Finance on request
Number of learners not able to access the discretionary fund	Applications turned down after funds are exhausted, by ethnicity, age, gender and disability	Head of Student Experience

ESFA Adult Fee Concessions

Provision	Note	Learning Aim/Offering Level	Aged 19 to 23	Aged 24+	19 and over Unemployed* or low wage ⚡
English and Maths	Must be delivered as one of the qualifications required for legal entitlement	Up to and including L2 Functional Skills or where not already achieved grades A*-C/9-4 in GCSE	No fees to pay	No fees to pay	No fees to pay
Progress to 'Full' Level 2 (L2)	Must be delivered as entry or level one provision from local flexibility. Learning aims (offerings) that are not classed as a 'full' level 2 are identified in the offering name (19-23 Refer). Enquiries from students aged 19-23 should be directed to the Funding Team	Up to and including L1	No fees to pay	Fees to pay	No fees to pay
		L2 (not 'full' L2) where previously achieved 'Full' L2	Fees to pay		
		L2 (not 'full' L2) where not previously achieved 'Full' L2	Fees to Pay No Concessions or Financial Support		19-23 Fees to Pay No Concessions Or Financial Support
GCSE Science	Biology or Combined Science are both qualifications included in legal entitlement	Not previously achieved 'Full' L2	No fees to pay	Fees to pay	No fees to pay
		Previously achieved 'Full' L2 or above	Fees to pay		
'Full' Level 2 (L2)	Must be delivered as one of the qualifications required for legal entitlement	Not previously achieved 'Full' L2	No fees to pay	Fees to pay	No fees to pay
		Previously achieved 'Full' L2 or above	Fees to pay		
Level 3 (L3)	Delivered as one of the qualifications listed in the Legal Entitlement offer. (This concession takes priority over availability of Advanced Learner Loan and Free Courses for Jobs offer)	Not previously achieved 'Full' L3	No fees to pay	Fees to Pay (Loan may be available)	N/A
		Previously achieved 'Full' L3 or above	Fees to Pay (Loan may be available)		Fees to Pay (Loan may be available)
	Delivered as one of the qualifications listed in the Free Courses for Jobs offer. (This concession takes priority over availability of Advanced Learner Loan)	Not previously achieved 'Full' L3	No fees to pay	Fees to Pay (Loan may be available)	No fees to pay
		Previously achieved 'Full' L3 or above	Fees to Pay (Loan may be available)		
Traineeship	Excludes flexible element where funding depends on age and level	Includes age 16-24 year olds	No fees to pay	N/A	N/A
ESOL		Learning up to and including L2	Fees to pay	Fees to pay	No fees to pay

* Unemployed - In receipt of JSA, Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and are in the work-related activity group (WRAG); Universal Credit or another state benefit

⚡ **Low Wage Flexibility may apply** – where student earns less than **£20,319** annual gross salary (wage slip, bank statement or contract of employment must be provided)

WYCA Adult Fee Concessions

Provision	Note	Learning Aim/Offering Level	Aged 19 to 23	Aged 24+	19 and over, Unemployed* or low wage ⚡
English and Maths	Must be delivered as one of the qualifications required for legal entitlement	Up to and including L2 Functional Skills or where not already achieved grades A*-C/9-4 in GCSE	No fees to pay	No fees to pay	No fees to pay
Progress to 'Full' Level 2 (L2)	Must be delivered as entry or level one provision from local flexibility in FALA. Learning aims (offerings) that are not classed as a 'full' level 2 are identified in the offering name (19-23 Refer). Enquiries from students aged 19-23 should be directed to the Funding Team	Up to and including L1	No fees to pay	Fees to pay	No fees to pay
		L2 (not 'full' L2) where previously achieved 'Full' L2	Fees to pay		No fees to pay
		L2 (not 'full' L2) where not previously achieved 'Full' L2	No fees to pay		No fees to pay
GCSE Science	Biology or Combined Science are both qualifications included in legal entitlement	Not previously achieved 'Full' L2	No fees to pay	No fees to pay	No fees to pay
		Previously achieved 'Full' L2 or above	Fees to pay	Fees to pay	
'Full' Level 2 (L2)	Must be delivered as one of the qualifications required for legal entitlement	Not previously achieved 'Full' L2	No fees to pay	No fees to pay	No fees to pay
		Previously achieved 'Full' L2 or above	Fees to pay	Fees to pay	
Level 3 (L3)	Delivered as one of the qualifications listed in the Legal Entitlement offer. (This concession takes priority over availability of Advanced Learner Loan and Free Courses for Jobs offer)	Not previously achieved 'Full' L3	No fees to pay	Fees to Pay (Loan may be available)	N/A
		Previously achieved 'Full' L3 or above	Fees to Pay (Loan may be available)		Fees to Pay (Loan may be available)
	Delivered as one of the qualifications listed in the Free Courses for Jobs offer. (This concession takes priority over availability of Advanced Learner Loan)	Not previously achieved 'Full' L3	No fees to pay	No fees to pay	No fees to pay
		Previously achieved 'Full' L3 or above	Fees to Pay (Loan may be available)	Fees to Pay (Loan may be available)	
Traineeship	Excludes flexible element where funding depends on age and level	Includes age 16-24 year olds	No fees to pay	N/A	N/A
ESOL	No fees to pay for asylum seekers, any age, resident in the UK for 6 months	Learning up to and including L2	Fees to pay	Fees to pay	No fees to pay

* **Unemployed** - In receipt of JSA, Employment and Support Allowance (ESA); Universal Credit or another state benefit

⚡ **Low Wage Flexibility may apply** – where student earns less than £21,255 annual gross salary (evidence dated within 3 months of learner start date required - wage slip, bank statement, employment contract or UC Statement) for residents of West Yorkshire Combined Authority.

Appendix 2 – Apprenticeship Fee Summary

Course Fee Responsibility Summary	Level	Student fee	Sponsor fee	ESFA funded
16-18 Apprentices (where employer has fewer than 50 employees) or eligible 19-24 year olds with EHCP or have been in care with LA.	all	0	0	100%
16-18 Apprentices (where non-levy paying employer has 50+ employees)	all	0	Price agreed with employer	Dependent on price agreed with employer and funding cap
19+ Apprentices (for non-levy paying employers)	all	0	Price agreed with employer	Dependent on price agreed with employer and funding cap
Apprentices of all ages (levy paying employers)	all	0	Price agreed with employer	Dependent on price agreed with employer, levy funds available, and funding cap