The Sheffield College

POLICY

Tuition Fees and Charges Policy 2024/2025

[Document Reference:]

Document administration

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February 2019	V1		
January 2020	V2		
March 2021	V3	Moving HE Fees policy into a separate policy document. Updating ELT titles.	
March 2022	V4		
March 2023	V5		
June 2023	V6		
March 2024	V7	See rationale below.	
June 2024	V8		

Fees and charges need updating annually to reflect changes in funding rules and support for students as well as the external commercial environment.

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Associated documents

External funding guidance

The policy will be updated, following publication of national guidance for 2024/2025, normally in March and guidance for the devolved grant elements of the allocation.

Document	Description and link
1	16-19 funding rules: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advice-funding-regulations for post 16 provision
	regulations-for-post-16-provision
2	Adult skills funding rates and formula (including programme weightings/bands): Adult
	skills fund: funding rates and formula 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
3	Adult skills budget funding rules: Adult skills fund: funding rules 2024 to 2025 - GOV.UK
	(www.gov.uk)
4	Apprenticeship funding information for employers:
	https://www.gov.uk/employing-an-apprentice
	https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apprenticeship-funding-rules
5	Free Courses for Jobs: Free courses for jobs - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
6	Internal Policy Documents:
	Financial Regulations
	Subcontracting Fees and Charges Policy

1. Policy Statement

College tuition fees are charged in accordance with Government funding guidance to ensure that they cover the costs of every programme.

2. Definitions

- 2.1: LARS Database: Learning Aim Reference Service (LARS) offers a web-based search facility, called finding a learning aim (FaLa), which allows users to search by most commonly used fields for Qualifications, Units, Apprenticeship Frameworks, Apprenticeship Standards along with their associated validity and funding details. LARS downloads are available to allow colleges, training organisations and employers (providers) to interrogate the same LARS data set that is used in the Funding Information System (FIS).
- 2.2: **Tuition Fees:** fees payable for courses of learning for which it is the responsibility of the learner to ensure payment is made which may be partially funded through grants, sponsorship of others of paid on their behalf through loan mechanisms.

3. Principles

The key principles that underlie the fees and charges policy are:

- fees will be based on published guidance from funding and relevant regulatory bodies
- the cost of awarding body registration and examination fees for all further and higher education courses are included in the course tuition fee
- commercial fees will be based on market prices
- refunds will only be given where appropriate
- tuition fees shall not include provision of course books and individual's study materials, exam
 re-sit costs or retake costs for course modules, unless included in the student's grant funding
 or otherwise stated on a course-by-course basis. Fees do not include, and hence the college
 also expects students to pay separately for non-essential activities e.g. photocopying and
 computer printing costs and for the costs of educational trips and visits, travel to and from
 college and meals and refreshments whilst at college
- the college will, wherever possible, enable and facilitate students to access other funds available to contribute to the fees and charges for those students who would otherwise have difficulty in paying these costs.

4. Scope and Limitations

The fees policy covers all age groups, modes and levels of teaching except Higher Education fees. Higher Education fees are covered by the Higher Education Fees Policy separately.

The policy provides information about what fees should be charged to students and when it might be appropriate for students to apply for a fee waiver.

5. Responsibilities

The governing body is responsible for setting the policy by which the tuition and other fees payable to it are determined, in accordance with <u>Instrument and Articles of Government</u> (Article 19 refers).

The Chief Executive and Principal, as Accounting Officer, is responsible for overall operation of the fees policy of the college.

The Executive Director of Finance is responsible for updating, monitoring the implementation of, and evaluation of the policy and for considering applications for fee waivers.

The Deputy Chief Executive/Executive Director of Commercial and Operations is responsible for ensuring that fees are appropriately advertised to all prospective students.

The Deputy Chief Executive/Executive Director of Commercial and Operations is responsible for proposing fees for Apprenticeships and full cost.

The Executive Director of Strategy and Systems Improvement is responsible for ensuring that the correct fees are captured in the college's system and accurate information is available to students throughout enrolment.

6. Implementation Arrangements

The following fees and charges will be implemented for the academic year commencing August 2024.

7. Monitoring and Review

This policy is subject to annual review. Such review would normally take account of any changes to government funding policies, changes in the college's costs in providing programmes and market conditions, as appropriate.

8. Guidelines

8.1: ESFA Funded Courses

Tuition Fees – college fees vary according to a student's age, level of study, qualifications on entry, the type of programme being studied and where and how the course is delivered.

Students aged 16-18 (excluding apprentices) who meet the following criteria will **NOT** be charged a tuition fee:

- Students who start their full or part time study programme aged:
- 16-18 (i.e. under 19 on 31 August in the teaching year when the study programme commenced) or
- 19-24 and have an Education Health Care (EHC) plan and
- meet the student eligibility requirements in section 3 of the Funding Guidance for Young People 2024-25 Advice: funding regulations for post-16 provision GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Adult Students (excluding apprentices) who meet the following criteria will **NOT** be charged a tuition fee:

- for individuals aged 19 and over who have not yet previously attained a GCSE grade A*-C/9-4 enrolling onto an English and/or maths programme up to and including level 2
- enrolment to a first full qualification at level 2 for individuals aged 19-23 and / or
- enrolment to a first full qualification at level 3 for individuals aged 19-23
- Unemployed learners, or those on a low wage (below £25,000), for both ESFA funded, and non-regulated programmes up to and including Level 3 (Level 3 – Free Courses for Jobs related)

The list of qualifications that are eligible for funding can be found in the <u>Adult Skills funding:</u> <u>funding rules.</u>

Adult Students (excluding Apprentices) who do **NOT** meet the above criteria:

Where an adult student does not fit the above criteria, and for all non-approved courses, fees are payable by students based on the LARS database. A summary of fees is provided in **Appendix 1**.

The rules concerning instances where students are eligible for 100% remission from payment of the fees can also be found within this guidance. In addition to funded remission, the college has additional local remission for certain categories of student – see **Appendix 2**.

The college recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances in which a certain level of discretion may need to be exercised in terms of charging tuition fees and associated charges, in particular because of market forces. In such cases, staff should consult the Executive Director of Finance for consent for the relevant fees to be reduced. It is not expected that any such requests will be made on the basis that a student is unable to pay their fees.

Student Support

The college has a limited, means tested student support fund that can help current students with tuition fee costs in some circumstances. Details are available from the Director of Student Services.

It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that the application process for support funds is completed in full. If the student starts attending without support funds having been received by the college, the college reserves the right to prevent the student from attending classes or participating in other teaching, learning or assessment activities until satisfactory arrangements for payment of all outstanding fees have been made.

Other charges

Students will not be charged for additional costs except for the following:

- **DBS checks** where the check is not required for participation in learning or where it is related to the learner's employer in which case the employer is responsible for the cost
- Any examination or awarding body fees incurred where a student chooses not to attend an
 examination without informing the college 48 hours in advance or where they do not have
 evidence that the lack of attendance was unavoidable
- Resit examination fees or awarding body fees will apply for all students who choose to resit an examination previously sat with The Sheffield College. The re-sit fee for each exam will be the examination fee set by the relevant awarding body. Re-sit fees must be paid in full in advance. Students must re-sit the relevant exam at the first appropriate opportunity. After this, they will be required to pay the external candidate fee
- Health and Safety Clothing and Equipment which is necessary to undertake their programme of study and where the equipment will remain the property of the student once the course has been completed. Alternatively, students can borrow safety equipment / special clothing free of charge
- Materials on practical courses e.g. art and design programmes. Contributions will be voluntary, but a student who does not make the specified contribution will not be able to retain any practical work they have completed
- **Trips or visits** undertaken which do not link to learning outcomes on the student's programme of study, a fee may be charged for such trips and visits but not for trips and visits that enable students to complete learning outcomes for their qualifications.

Any student enrolled on a Functional Skills programme will be allowed one re-sit free of charge where a fail is recorded against their first assessment or examination attempt for a particular learning aim. The awarding body fee in respect of any subsequent examination attempt will be passed on in full to the student; this may be waived at the discretion of the college.

Exam only

External candidates may sit an exam for subjects that the college has approval for and with Awarding Organisation we already work with. An administration fee of £50.00 plus the relevant examination fee which must be paid in full in advance. An external candidate is defined as an individual who is not enrolled on the course to which the exam relates.

Withdrawals

On enrolment, every student enters a contract with the college. This contract will include the relevant tuition fee to be paid by that student. Should a student subsequently withdraw from their course, they will still be liable for their full tuition fee.

Students who have taken out a tuition fee loan will no longer be able to access this once they have withdrawn but they will still be liable for their full fee, subject to the application of the College Refund Policy.

Payments

Students may be able to apply for an Advanced Learner Loan. Guidance on who can access these loans can be found at the Advanced Learner Loan website.

Course Fees must be paid in full at enrolment, unless:

- written confirmation of liability for fees has been supplied by an employer
- Written confirmation of liability for fees has been supplied by embassy for international student
- evidence of student loan, advanced learner loan, or career development loan funding is provided
- a direct debit or Instalment agreement has been completed
- confirmation of acceptance of an application for Discretionary Learner Support is provided.

Instalments

Students on programmes that are longer than 12 weeks and where the total cost is above £150, have the option of paying in three instalments, the first instalment being paid on enrolment.

Students on programmes that are longer than 26 weeks and where the cost is more than £500, have the option of paying in six instalments, the first instalment being paid on enrolment.

Students on programmes that are longer than 26 weeks and where the cost is more than £3,000, have the option of paying in ten instalments, the first instalment being paid on enrolment.

Extended payment terms may be agreed at enrolment for individual students in exceptional circumstances by the Financial Controller. However, in such cases the final instalment must be received no later than 4 weeks before the published end date of the relevant programme.

For courses extending over more than one year, the whole course fee is payable in the first year of the course, with the number of monthly instalments prescribed above. Tuition fees may only be split across more than one year in exceptional circumstances with the consent of the Financial Controller.

Withdrawals & Advanced Learner Loans

Students funding their learning through Advanced Learner Loans should be aware that, if they cease to attend their course, amounts due in respect of tuition fees cease to be paid by Student Finance Company to the college on behalf of the student. In the event that the student withdraws or does not resume attendance of their course within a four-week period, the outstanding balance of tuition fees not paid by Student Finance will become immediately payable to the college by the student.

8.2: Courses not funded by the ESFA or regulated by the Office for Students

Tuition fees are charged based on a full cost model. This includes Distance Learning and Flexible IT courses.

8.3: Apprenticeships Tuition Fees (including Intermediate, Advanced, Higher and Degree Level Apprenticeships)

The college will negotiate the fee to be charged for any apprenticeship it provides with the relevant employer. The fee will be informed by current government funding guidance.

This guidance does not dictate the fee that the college charges for an apprenticeship. It does limit the amount of funding that government provides via an employer's digital apprenticeship account towards the cost of an apprenticeship. It also stipulates the minimum contribution that any employer must make towards the total cost of an apprenticeship programme.

<u>Tuition Fee Discount (levy and non-levy employers)</u>

The college may offer a discount on the cost of its apprenticeship provision and/or the level of co-investment required from an employer. Any such discount can only be offered with the prior consent of the Deputy Chief Executive/Executive Director Commercial and Operations or the Executive Director of Finance, where the proposed discount is up to 10% of programme funding. Any proposed discount above this level must be approved in advance by the Chief Executive and Principal.

Incentives

A range of financial and other incentives are available to employers that take on apprentices. The Sheffield College is able to offer advice on these.

Other charges

Additional training or skills development provided for an employer that is over and above that charged for the relevant apprenticeship. The payment terms for this additional charge will be subject to negotiation and agreed in writing prior to delivery.

End-point assessment may be charged to the employer by co-investment. However, in most cases it is anticipated that such a charge will not be necessary. Any additional co-investment in respect of end-point assessment must be authorised in advance by the Deputy Chief Executive/Executive Director Commercial and Operations, the Executive Director of Finance or the Chief Executive and Principal.

Withdrawals

Should an apprenticeship be terminated prior to completion of the Apprenticeship programme for any reason, the College will comply with ESFA funding regulations in operation at that time.

Payment

Levy Paying Employers (typically companies with an annual payroll of £3 million or more) that pay the apprenticeship levy must meet the full cost of any apprenticeships they purchase from the college with the balance of funds in their digital apprenticeship service account.

Where the monthly cost of apprenticeship training provided by the college cannot be met in full from an employer's digital apprenticeship service account, that employer must contribute or coinvest at least 5% of the outstanding cost of their apprenticeships for that month. The government will then contribute the remaining 95%.

Non-Levy Employers that do not pay the apprenticeship levy are required to make a coinvestment payment of 5% towards the cost of any apprenticeship training they purchase. In some circumstances, a higher employer co-investment may be required.

For employers with 50 staff or less, where the apprentice is 16 to 18 years old at the start of their programme, the government will fund the apprenticeship training in full up to the maximum allowed under the current government funding rules. Such rules are liable to change from time to time and the college reserves the right to charge fees where the full cost is not met by government funding.

Instalments

If the total value of co-investment required for an apprenticeship is £250 or less, the college will collect this in full at the start of the apprenticeship. Any employer co-investment of more than £250 will be collected in equal monthly instalments as set out in the table below:

Minimum Employer	Monthly	Monthly Instalment
Co- Investment	Instalments	Amount
Up to £250	1	up to £250
Up to £600	3	up to £200
Up to £1,200	6	up to £200
Up to £1,800	10	up to £180
Up to £2,700	15	up to £180
£2,701+	16 or more	up to £180

Direct debit instructions for employer co-investment will be presented each month. If a direct debit request is not completed for any reason, the college will present this for payment again within 14 days. If an employer fails to meet three consecutive direct debit requests, the college reserves the right to terminate the relevant apprenticeship training.

Should an employer not make the minimum co-investment stipulated by government, the college would not be permitted to draw down the associated apprenticeship funding.

Where this is the case, the college reserves the right to pursue the employer for the full cost of any apprenticeship delivery that has been undertaken.

Non-Completion of the Apprenticeship Programme

Where a student withdraws from the apprenticeship programme before all training has been delivered, a refund will be made to the employer based on the number of months of the course that were completed. For employers who pay the apprenticeship levy, the refund will be credited to their Digital Apprenticeship Service Account ('DAS'). For non-levy employers, a refund will be made where the employer has paid up front.

8.4: Higher Education

The Office for Students defines Higher Education courses in terms of Schedule 6 of the Education Reform Act 1988. This includes Higher and Degree apprentices where the study involves at least one element at level 4 or higher. These fees are covered in a separate policy for Higher Education Tuition Fees.

8.5: International Fees

<u>Tuition Fees – English as a Foreign Language Programmes</u>

Fees for European (UK/EU and EEA) and overseas students to study English as a Foreign Language or full time are as follows:

English as a Foreign Language - Full-time, 20 hours per week (02/09/2024 to 27/06/2025)			
Dates	Overseas students		
Weekly price - study 2 to 14	£275		
weeks			
Weekly price - study 15 to 33 weeks	£255		
Courses paid after the enrolment	£300		

Summer School

Fees for all students to study English as a Foreign Language full-time during summer school in July are £230/week.

Other Charges

Other charges may be made for services requested by students including for accommodation.

Withdrawals

If having accepted an offer, a prospective student does not enrol because their visa has been refused or for any other reason, then the deposit is non-refundable.

Payment

A deposit of £300 is required when accepted onto the course, for the college's reasonable administration costs and is non-refundable.

The balance of fees is payable in full before enrolment. The student is responsible for any bank charges incurred in making the payment(s). If a student will pay the fees after the enrolment, the fees will be charged at £300/week.

Tuition Fees – Other Programmes (UKVI)

Fees for overseas students who are studying full time programmes of a minimum duration of 15 hours per week over the full year.

Fees are charged on the basis of the types of provision for classroom and workshop-based elements. The guide below sets out the fees:

Type of programme	Annual Minimum Fee
Level 3 courses	9,000
Level 4 courses	10,800
Level 5 courses or above	10,800

Use instead:

Type of programme	Annual Minimum Fee
Level 3 courses	9,000
Level 4 courses	10,800
Level 5 courses or above	10,800

Other Charges

Other charges may be made for services requested by students including for accommodation.

Payment

A deposit of £1,000 is required when accepted onto the course. £500 is for the college's reasonable administration costs and is non-refundable and £500 is for the course fee, refundable in the event of a Visa refusal.

The balance of annual course fees is payable in full before enrolment. The student is responsible for any bank charges incurred in making the payment(s).

8.7: Debt and Debt Collection

If the tuition fees are not paid by the student at the point of enrolment, the college will make every effort to remind students those fees are due. Invoices will be issued after the start of the academic term, these are reminders only and students are responsible for paying fees on time whether reminders are received or not.

If a student fails to agree arrangements to pay fees, they will be withdrawn from their course. Even though they are no longer a student, they will still be liable to pay the full tuition fees for the course if they have exceeded the 14 day cooling off period.

Students who agree an instalment plan with the college will receive written confirmation from the college of direct debit instalment dates and amounts at least ten days before the first payment is due. Reminders for individual instalments will not be sent.

In the event of a failed instalment payment or cancelled direct debit, the option of payment by instalment will cease and all outstanding fees will be due immediately. If a student knows in advance that a direct debit will fail, it is essential that they contact fees@sheffcol.ac.uk immediately to agree alternative arrangements for payment.

Students who do not secure loan finance from funding bodies such as Student Finance England are required to arrange for the payment of tuition fees. The college reserves the right to demand that a direct debit mandate is signed by the student and instalment payments are taken. Any monies subsequently paid by the student loan company will be refunded to the student

If the employer/sponsor does not pay the invoice, the college reserves the right to raise an invoice to the student at the beginning of the next calendar month, which must be settled immediately or the college may agree to settlement by a direct debit instalment plan. If the student does not pay the fee in full nor agree a payment plan, the college reserves the right to prevent the student from attending classes or participating in other teaching, learning or assessment activities until satisfactory arrangements for payment of all outstanding fees have been made.

On an exceptional basis, where the student has special extenuating circumstances, the Executive Director of Finance may approve an individual payment plan with a student. If the student fails to comply with the terms of an exceptional payment plan, the payment plan shall cease with immediate effect and any outstanding balance of fees will be due for immediate payment. Students experiencing financial difficulties should contact the fees@sheffcol.ac.uk as soon as they are aware of the problem.

Where students breach the terms of the instalment agreement, the college will use appropriate debt recovery procedures and may exclude such students from the college or remove access to teaching or services until the full debt is paid.

The college refers unpaid debts to an external agency to pursue payment. A student who has been referred to an external agency will be liable for the reasonable additional costs incurred by the college and its agent in collecting the debt, such costs are added to the debt.

If a student completes the course with an outstanding tuition fee debt of more than £50 then, until the debt is paid, the student will:

- not be permitted to re-register for new courses or to continue their course
- not be entered for assessment or examinations pertaining to the course
- not be permitted to attend the Awards Ceremony or equivalent
- not be issued with any academic references.

If a student owes the college any other debt (such as library fines, nursery fees, and tuition fees under £50), the college will use its debt procedures to recover these.

Exceptions to the above (e.g. allowing a student to enroll on a course when they are in debt to the college for tuition fees for the same or a different course) will only be granted in exceptional circumstances and requires the express written approval of the Executive Director Finance.

8.8: Deferring a course after having attended a part year and then withdrawing

Withdrawals where a student does not enrol for a future year

These are covered in sections above. The college will take enforcement action to recover the full year course fee for which the student is liable where they attended beyond the 14-day colling off period.

Deferrals where the student has an approved loan in place

If a student decides to withdraw and defer to a subsequent year without having made payment for the course year attended, the student must pay in full for the course. Evidence of having an approved loan in place is not sufficient to allow payment to be deferred to a subsequent year, as the loan could be cancelled prior to attending in the subsequent year.

If a student then starts attending in a subsequent year with an approved loan in place, the college will repay any fees paid by the student for the previous year

8.9: Transfers between Courses and Other Changes in Learning Outcomes (19+ Students)

Transfers between courses initiated by the student

Where a student requests a transfer between courses or between qualifications on the same level, which results in a change to the course fee payable by the student, they will be liable to pay any amount that is not funded by ESFA. Before transferring, the student must talk to their tutor, who will refer the student for appropriate information, advice, and guidance. This should include the financial implications of the course change.

Changes in Learning Aims made after enrolment

The college makes every effort to provide the course specified at enrolment but sometimes has to make changes due to external changes or in the best interests of the students. The college will not make any additional charges where changes made by the college after enrolment have an impact on the course being eligible for ESFA funding. This includes, amongst other things, changes to the learning outcome, awarding body, or the size of a qualification.

8.10: Fee Waivers

Requests for fees to be waived must be made via email to <u>fees@sheffcol.ac.uk</u> and marked for the attention of the Executive Director of Finance.

For some courses, fee waivers will be agreed as part of the Business Planning process for the college. These will be formally signed off. New courses in year where a fee waiver applies will be formally signed off by the Executive Director of Finance.

No other members of college staff have the authority to agree to waiving a fee; this includes any curriculum staff including Academy Directors or Vice Principals.

8.11: Fee Refund Policy

The college will provide a full refund of fees when a course does not run or closes because of a decision by the college.

The full fee for a course is payable even if the student decides not to complete the course. The college will not grant refunds.

The provisions under this policy do not affect the student's statutory rights, where acting as a consumer.

Cooling Off Period

The College may agree to provide a full refund of any fees paid where a student withdraws from their programme within 14 days of the course start date (typically, the first date of attendance unless otherwise notified).

Online Enrolments

Cancellation requests in respect of online enrolments should be submitted by email to dataservices@sheffcol.ac.uk.

8.12: Annual Review of Fees and Charges

Students should be aware that course fees are reviewed annually and may increase in line with inflation or as permitted by relevant regulations. Only in exceptional circumstances will the college make in-year changes to increase course fees once a student enrolls for that year's course.

8.13: Correspondence

Any correspondence regarding fees and charges should be marked for the attention of the Executive Director of Finance and sent via email to fees@sheffcol.ac.uk

Alternatively correspondence in writing can be addressed to:

Executive Director of Finance:

The Sheffield College Granville Road Sheffield S2 2RL

Please note that there is no automatic right of appeal against any decision made in respect of a fee refund request. However, where a refund is not granted in line with this policy and there are specific considerations for appeal, this may be presented to the Deputy Principal at the same address above. Appeals will be considered on their individual merits and the Deputy Principal's decision is final.

Appendix 1: Adult Skills Fund (ASF) funding for Funding Bands - Hours

The hourly rates are below:

New adult skills funding band	Base	Low	Medium	High	Specialist
New hourly adult skills funding rate	£6.00	£7.20	£8.40	£9.60	£12.00

Please note that every qualification attached to a course will attract a fee, so that a student enrolling on a programme made up of multiple learning aims will be charged a composite fee.

Courses will be charged according to the programme weighting in the above table. Co-funded fees will be charged at 50% of the base rate. Where there is no funding eligibility for courses that attract a programme of weighting of C or higher (up to G), the fee may be reduced to a lower weighting with consent from the Executive Director of Finance.

Exceptions to the funding bands above:

*NB table based on 2022/23 guidance and will be updated once final rates are published

Qualification Description	Funding Band	Rate
English/Maths GCSE	Low	£864
Functional Skills Maths Entry Level	Medium	£941
Functional Skills Maths Levels 1 & 2	Base	£724
Digital Functional Skills	Medium (55glh)	£462

Appendix 2: Local Remission

Local Remission Category: Students	Fees/Discount %	Comment
	(applies to	
	tuition fees	
	shown on EBS)	
Full-time 19 year old students taking new	50%	Protecting an existing
subjects integral to existing programmes		programme
Courses specifically designed for students with	100%	Inclusiveness: providing
Learning Difficulties and Disability (LDD)		assistance to LDD students
including sensory impairment but excluding		
Sign Language		
Students under 25 who have an EHC Plan	100%	Inclusiveness: providing
		assistance to students with an
		EHC
Full-time 19+ college students requiring GCSE	100%	Attract potential HE students to
English and/or maths at grade C/4 or higher to		the college
progress to Higher Education		

	Fees/Discount % (applies to tuition fees shown on EBS)
Staff training mandated by the college	100%
,	50% Additional charges, such as exam fees, are payable. Conditions apply
Note that this does not apply to Level 3 courses or above for staff aged 24 or greater, as staff will be eligible for a loan to cover the course fee	
PGCE	50%