

Fees and Charges Policy

2023-2024

For the attention of: All Staff
Produced by: Deputy CEO
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Vision, Purpose & Values

Our Vision

Our students will be recognised locally & nationally for their positive impact on the communities and industries in which they choose to work.

Our Purpose

To inspire our students to gain the skills, knowledge and behaviours they need to be resilient and thrive in an ever-changing world.

Our Values

Excellence: A culture of creativity, high expectations, ambition and aspiration

Respect: Showing fairness, courtesy and mutual respect to each other and our environment

Integrity: Honesty, openness and trust at the heart of college life

Diversity: Celebrating diversity and inclusivity as a key to our success

Fees and Charges Policy 2023-24

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1. Overriding Objectives

1.1 The following objectives have been central to the fee policy of The Windsor Forest Colleges Group in previous years and remain so for 2023-24:

- The fee structure of the college should be transparent.
- The fee structure should be easy to understand for all prospective learners and enrolling staff.
- The fee levels should target as far as possible the Education and Skills Funding Agency's (ESFA) and Greater London Authority's (GLA) assumed fee income targets.
- The fee can be adjusted at course level to respond to or to maintain our market competitiveness.
- The policy should be in line with relevant legislation.
- The implementation of the policy should not be administratively burdensome but should be sympathetic to the learner's needs.
- The policy should be consistent with Government policy and guidance issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), the Greater London Authority (GLA) and the Office for Students (OfS).

2. Fee Structure for 2023-24

2.1 Course fees

2.1.1 The course fees include the cost of exams (except for resits), and any materials costs (unless the materials are retained).

The course fee DOES NOT include charges such as:

- The purchase of books and equipment
- Fines, for example, for the late return of library books
- Re-issuing ID cards
- Field Trips
- Subscription to Professional Associations

2.1.1 Funding classifications for learners aged 19 or over

Fully Funded - the Government meets the assumed full cost of the course fee.

Co-Funded - the Government contributes to the assumed cost of the course fee.

Not Funded - the Government makes no contribution towards the assumed cost of the course fee.

The classification that the learner comes under is decided by both Government and college policy. The current rules are included in Section 6 - Associated Documents.

2.3 Fees by age group and category – see Appendix A

3. Payment

3.1 Fees for college-based courses are either to be settled in full at the time of enrolment or may be paid by instalments or where eligible learners may be able to fund their course by an Advanced Learning or Higher Education loans from the Student Loans Company (SLC).

3.2 Payment by instalment

Collection of instalments will be made either to the Admissions team at each college or by automated regular debit card payments. The date of the instalment will be the first day of each month or if this falls on a weekend or bank holiday, then the next working day. These methods of payment are only open to learners who have banking arrangements, i.e. current accounts. Learners wishing to pay by instalments will pay 25% of the total amount at enrolment and the balance of 75% as stipulated on the instalment plan. Students are ultimately responsible for settling debts in a timely manner. The Group Principal and CEO or Deputy CEO have the authority to vary these arrangements as they feel fit.

3.2.1 Instalments will not be offered to learners who have defaulted in previous years.

3.3 Payment by employer

Where a learner is sponsored by an employer an original letter on company headed paper, and preferably an official purchase order, signed by the employer and acknowledging responsibility for payment of the fee, must be presented at the time of enrolment, otherwise the fees are due from the learner.

3.3.1 Separate arrangements apply to the collection of apprentices fees from employers.

3.4 Payment by loan from the Student Loans Company (SLC)

3.4.1 Where learners wish to access loan funding to fund their course, the responsibility for applying for and liaising with the SLC is that of the student. Students who intend to use an SLC loan will need to provide evidence of their successful loan application when they enrol.

- 3.4.2 The college will support students in applying for loans and can advise them on the general eligibility criteria but is not responsible for the success of any loan application.
- 3.4.3 At the point of enrolment all learners who do not have loan approval, but who wish to enrol on and start on a course will be required to provide evidence that they have applied for a loan from the SLC. The college will then at its own discretion risk assess the individual's likelihood of receiving a loan from the SLC. If the college is satisfied, then the applicant will be required to make a card payment for £300 and sign a fee agreement confirming their intention to fund their course from an Advanced Learning or Higher Education Loan from the SLC as appropriate. The card payment will be refundable once approval of the loan has been confirmed by the SLC.
- 3.4.4 Should the loan funding not be in place six weeks after the commencement of the course, then the college will (exceptional circumstances aside) either invoice the learner for the full course fee (in order for them to continue on the course) or require the learner to leave the course with immediate effect (to be included in fee statement in 3.4.3 above).

3.5 Financial support

- 3.5.1 Financial Support may be given to eligible learners experiencing financial difficulties. However, in line with the college Admissions Policy the college reserves the right to either withhold a place on a programme of study or to withdraw learners from their courses if a fee remains unpaid and/or if the learner already has outstanding debts with the college.
- 3.5.2 The college administers a Hardship Fund which has limited and finite resources to assist eligible learners who experience difficulties in meeting the costs of attending college. Applications to the fund for help with tuition fees are assessed on an individual basis against previously determined criteria and are awarded on a sliding scale. Where a learner wishes to enrol on a course but has financial difficulties, form Financial Support (FS) 1, which is available from Learner Services should be completed. A decision on the request for support will be made as soon as possible.

4. Refunds and additional fees

- 4.1 Refunds will not be made after the student commences attendance on the course unless there are exceptional circumstances, e.g., where the college closes or changes the location or time of the course to that referenced in the prospectus, or where serious illness of the student prevents attendance.

- 4.2 Where a course is cancelled the relevant senior Curriculum Manager is responsible for raising the appropriate course cancellation or amendment form and for requesting the processing of the relevant refund.
- 4.3 All requests for individual refunds in 4.1 above must be submitted in writing to the relevant Principal. The request will be assessed in collaboration with the senior Curriculum Manager on its individual merits.
- 4.4 Additional fees may be charged to a student where they transfer between courses and the new course has a higher fee, depending on the reason for the change of course. Where the student has been transferred to suit the college's circumstances, no additional fees will be sought. Where the learner requests the transfer themselves then it is expected that they will be charged the higher fee. Where the new course has a lower fee, a refund will be provided.

5. Changes to the Fees Policy

- 5.1 Factors may come to light that require a change to this policy after its approval, e.g. revised Government guidance. The Group Principal and CEO or Deputy CEO are authorised to make amendments to the policy during the year. They are also authorised to interpret the policy for specific situations that arise during the year that are not explicitly covered in the policy. In these circumstances, the general principles and spirit of the policy will be followed.
- 5.2 There is no appeal to decisions made by the Group Principal and CEO or Deputy CEO on the application of the policy.

6. Associated documents

- 6.1 ESFA funding guidance
- 6.2 College Examination Fees Re-sit policy

Fees by Age Group and Category

Age group	Category	Funding	Comments
16-18 and 19+ continuing	Classroom	N/A	<p>Learners aged 16-18 are expected to be following an agreed study programme (either full time of greater than 540 qualifying hours, or part time of less than 540 qualifying hours) or an apprenticeship. Note that an additional 40 hours are required from 2022-23 to be funded from the ESFA's catch-up funding grant. Learners aged 18 and 19+ continuing students (who are students continuing an ESFA funded programme they began aged 16 to 18) are only expected to follow a programme of at least 450 qualifying hours (plus catch-up hours) or an apprenticeship. The college will not permit a learner to undertake a course which is not part of their study programme or apprenticeship or has no relevance to it. Learners aged 16-18 must undertake Maths and English as part of their study programme if they do not hold a GCSE (Grade 4 or above) in these subjects.</p> <p>No course fee will be charged for these learners on a study programme.</p> <p>An examination fee will be charged if the learner is re-sitting an exam after failure or to improve their grades, if</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the attendance/performance of the learner on the course is below what is expected (Excl. Illness or other acceptable reason) • the student does not attend the exam paid for by the group • a student fails an exam and wants to re-sit, but is not funded in the year or the re-sit (I.e. the student did not return to the college as a learner and is therefore not funded) • the student re-sits an exam to improve the original grade, but is not funded in the year or the re-sit (I.e. did not return to the college as a learner and is therefore not funded)

Age group	Category	Funding	Comments
			<p>If a learner requires equipment or materials and retains these during the course, then these will be charged to the learner.</p>
16-18	Traineeships	N/A	<p>No course fee will be charged for a learner on a traineeship.</p> <p>An examination fee will be charged if the learner is re-sitting an exam after failure or to improve their grades. See the group's Examination Fees Re-sit Policy.</p> <p>If a learner requires equipment or materials and retains these at the end of the course, then these will be charged to the learner.</p>
19 to 23	Classroom	Fully funded	<p>No course fee will be charged in the following circumstances if the student is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • studying for their first full Level 2, or Level 3 qualification. • studying for a Level 1 or Entry Level qualification without having a full Level 2 qualification (which must be delivered as Entry or Level 1 provision from the local flexibility fund). • Unemployed and in receipt of a state benefit, seeking to enter employment and undertaking relevant skills training to do so, up to Level 2. • In receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance. • In receipt of Employment and Support Allowance. • In receipt of Universal Credit because they are unemployed. • studying for GCSE English and/or Maths or an approved English or Maths qualification for those without these subjects at GCSE Grade 4 or above. <p>An examination fee will be charged if the learner is re-sitting an exam after failure or to improve their grades. See the group's Examination Fees Re-sit Policy.</p> <p>If a learner requires equipment or materials and retains these at the end of the course, then these will be charged to the learner.</p>

Age group	Category	Funding	Comments
		Co-funded	<p>Co-funded up to Level 2</p> <p>For full time courses there is an annual fee of £1,530 for students commencing in 2023-24. For students who started their course in 2022-2023, now taking the second year of their course in 2023-24, the fee will also be £1,530.</p> <p>For part time courses the fees are as published.</p> <p>Course fees as above will be charged in the following circumstances (unless the student is unemployed):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Studying for an Entry Level or Level 1 qualification having previously attained a full qualification at Level 2 or above. • Studying for a full Level 2 qualification having previously achieved a full Level 2 qualification. • Studying for another Level 2 qualification (local flexibility provision may be fully funded dependent on learners, age, prior attainment, and circumstances). • Studying for an ESOL qualification. <p>An examination fee will be charged if the learner is re-sitting an exam after failure to improve their grades – See the group’s Examination Fees Re-sit Policy.</p> <p>If a learner requires equipment or materials and retains these at the end of the course, then these will be charged to the learner.</p> <p>Co-funded for Level 3 and Above</p> <p>There are no co-funded courses for Level 3 and above. Instead, Advanced Learning Loans apply.</p>

Age group	Category	Funding	Comments
		Not funded	A fee covering all costs plus a contribution of at least 50% to the fixed costs of the college.
19 to 24	Traineeships	N/A	No course fee will be charged for individuals who are unemployed and on a traineeship.
19+	Advanced Learner Loans		Where the course is Not Funded and at Level 3 or above, the learner has the choice of applying for an Advanced Learning Loan or paying the college fee (but see National Skills Fund (NSF) for 24+ learners below). Prospective learners will be expected to have in place approval for their loan by the start of their programme. Learners who do not have approval for the appropriate loan on commencement will be required to either sign an Advanced Learning Loan fee agreement at enrolment, confirming their intention to apply for loan or demonstrate their commitment to cover their fees in another way (see payment section above).
24+	Classroom	Fully funded	No charge will be made for the unemployed up to Level 2. No charge will be made for first Level 3 courses where the qualifications are approved as qualifying under the National Skills Fund.
		Co-funded	Co-funding is not available.
		Not funded	A fee covering all costs plus a contribution of at least 50% to the operating costs of the college will be charged to the learner OR the employer.
14 to 16	From local schools	N/A	Where 14–16-year-olds are attending a course at the college, then the fee will be approved by the Deputy CEO or Group Principal and CEO. The home school will pay this.
	Via local authority	N/A	Where 14–16-year-olds are attending a course at the college, then the fee will be approved by the Deputy CEO or Group Principal & CEO. The local authority will pay this.

Age group	Category	Funding	Comments
N/A	Apprentices	N/A	<p>Employers are either a levy paying or non-levy paying employer. Levy paying employers are those employers with an annual payroll bill of over £3 million and they pay HMRC the apprenticeship levy. The levy (a hypothecated tax) is set at a rate of 0.5 percent of the pay above £3 million. HMRC then allocate a monthly amount to the employer’s digital account (plus a 10% government top up) which the employer can use to fund apprenticeships for up to 24 months. Once a levy paying employer has used up their levy pot then they switch to the five percent non-levied employer co- funded method.</p> <p>Non-levy employers pay a five percent contribution (co-investment) and the remainder is paid by the ESFA to the college. All apprenticeship funding including non-levy is accessed via the apprenticeship service and employers set up digital accounts and can reserve funds for their use rather than the college having an ESFA funding allocation per se as previously.</p> <p>The Windsor Forest Colleges Group pricing policy will be to charge employers the upper limit of the relevant band (apprenticeships fall into 30 bands) for the apprenticeship but will negotiate where appropriate to take into account prior knowledge, skills or behaviours and market forces including competition, volumes etc. The Windsor Forest Colleges Group will also charge and collect from employers the relevant five percent co-funding contribution.</p> <p>In exceptional circumstances, for example, where high delivery costs require it, the college may look to charge employers’ fees higher than the upper pricing band. In this circumstance, the college will charge the employer the difference between the band price and the fee proposed.</p> <p>The Group Principal and CEO or Deputy CEO and the Vice Principal Business Development will agree the fees.</p>
19+	Higher Education – direct prescribed	N/A	<p>Where a learner is undertaking a course that is directly funded by the Office for Students an annual fee will be set and will depend on the course content. The full time and part time fees will be updated shortly.</p>

Age group	Category	Funding	Comments
	Higher Education – indirect prescribed	N/A	Where the college is providing a course fundable as Higher Education provision on behalf of a university or other institute, the fees will be set after consideration of the course content and the Higher Education provider’s charges and competitor fees. The fees will be set by the Group Principal and CEO and Deputy CEO consideration of market forces.
N/A	Full cost – home students		A fee covering all costs plus a contribution of at least 50% to the operating costs of the college will be charged.
	Full cost – overseas for fee purposes		Learners will be charged the reported funding bodies rates for a Full Time Further Education Course. For a Part Time Further Education course, the fee will be pro-rata the above full-time fee.
N/A	Learners with low wages	N/A	The college will fund learners who are employed and who would normally be co-funded and who earn less per annum than the wage thresholds determined by the ESFA and GLA, subject to them providing evidence of annual wages that meet the ESFA funding rules and requirements.
N/A	Staff	N/A	This section applies where members of staff are undertaking a course as part of personal development. All applications for staff development should be made in line with the Staff Development Policy. Staff are required to show their current identity badge as proof of eligibility to staff discount.

Age group	Category	Funding	Comments
			<p>For courses of Personal Development/Interest, then 75% of the tuition fee element and the full amount of any awarding body fees is payable on ESFA and GLA funded FE courses by all college staff. There are no reductions for HE courses.</p> <p>Work related courses that are a mandatory or statutory requirement are free but must be requested through the Professional Development department in line with the Study Leave and Funding Policy. This applies to ESFA and GLA funded FE courses, HE courses and Full Cost courses.</p>
N/A	Military and public services staff		<p>Military and public services staff will be entitled to discounts of 5% for 'leisure and pleasure' courses and 10% for courses where the individuals concerned are looking to retrain.</p>

Age group	Category	Funding	Comments					
N/A	Transport-related charges (BCA only)	N/A		Fee £				Increase
				2023-24		2022-23		%
				Band A	Band B	Band A	Band B	
			Term 1	330	385	310	360	6.5/6.9
			Term 2	330	385	310	360	6.5/6.9
			Term 3	230	250	215	235	7.0/6.4
			Total of termly passes	890	1020	835	955	6.6/6.8
			Annual	775	925	725	865	6.9/6.9
			<p>Bus tickets: £6.90 per ticket i.e. £13.80 per day per round trip (2022-23 £6.45/£12.90)</p> <p>Students who qualify for financial support (see section 2 below) will be asked to make a non-refundable payment of either £95 for Band A (2022-23 £90) or £110 for Band B (2022-23 £105) before they are issued with a bus pass.</p>					