



South  
Staffordshire  
College

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## Fees Policy 2026-27

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Policy Originator:	Deputy Principal Finance & Resources
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Audience:	All Staff and Governors

## **Fees Policy including Fees Refund Policy**

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### **1.0 Policy Overview**

#### **1.1** The purpose of this Policy is to:

- Set out how the College charges fees for learning and training activities.
- Ensure fees encourage participation while complying with funding guidance.
- Ensure those who can afford to pay contribute appropriately, and those who cannot receive support.
- Explain how the College manages refunds.

#### **1.2** The key principles which shape the Policy include:

- All advertised fees must clearly outline any additional compulsory course costs such as essential equipment and trips.
- Fees are due on enrolment unless instalments, loans, or employer payments apply.
- Learners must sign a liability form if awaiting loan approval or employer confirmation.
- Learners cannot progress to the next year or be entered for exams if fees remain unpaid.
- Refunds are only granted under specific conditions detailed in the Policy.
- The Principal/CEO may amend fees in-year to reflect local market forces.

#### **1.3** It is the responsibility of all staff to:

- Give accurate fee information to learners particularly around fees on an annual or course basis (eg two year courses) and be fully transparent about additional compulsory course cost.
- Follow refund rules for learners who are withdrawing. Refunds must not be granted automatically.
- Maintain proper financial and student data records.
- Report any suspected financial irregularities to the Finance Team or a line manager.

#### **1.4** Currently, this Policy is based on the following funding guidance:

- DFE Funding Guidance for 2025-26.
- WMCA Funding Guidance for 2025-26.

#### **1.5** The main changes to the Policy:

- Increase the hourly cost of full cost courses to £11 per hour from £10 per hour.

## **2.0 Policy Statement and Scope**

### **Policy Statement**

- 2.1** The purpose of this Policy is to establish the approach of the College in respect of charges or learning and training activities.
- 2.2** The fees should encourage participation whilst accepting that government policy dictates that those who can afford it should pay an appropriate contribution and those who cannot afford it are appropriately supported. The Fees should be charged in accordance with the latest Department of Education (DFE) and West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA) Funding Guidance, which at the time of approval of this Policy is often the previous year's guidance.
- 2.3** "Fees" relate to all payments made by learners and/or their sponsors which are charged by the College to contribute to the full or partial costs of College courses including course tuition, registration and examination costs, equipment and resources and any other attributable costs.
- 2.4** This Policy also gives guidance on how the College deals with any refunds of fees.

### **Policy Scope**

- 2.5** This Policy applies to all areas of the College including any subsidiaries and will encompass all staff and governors.
- 2.6** Other policies and procedures linked to this Policy include:
- Financial Regulations
  - FE Bursary Policy
  - Higher Education Terms and Conditions
  - Higher Education Fees Policy
  - Fraud Policy and Response Plan
- 2.7** UK Legislation linked to the Policy includes:
- Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008
  - Consumer Rights Act 2015

## **3.0 General**

- 3.1** This Policy will be implemented in accordance with all existing and emerging legislation and in accordance with the relevant guidance documents from the DFE and any other relevant funding bodies. The DFE issues new funding guidance annually.
- 3.2** The College will comply with conditions as specified in each of its funding contracts and accountability agreements held for the provision of education and training. Full cost courses

will be charged at a commercial rate and must be agreed in advance with a member of ELT via the curriculum planning process. A minimum rate is applicable to full cost courses.

- 3.3** Advertised fees for programmes of study will be identified as fully as possible, including any administration fee applicable, essential equipment, essential clothing, essential trips and visits plus any other costs associated with the programme of study.
- 3.4** These costs must be communicated to the learner in a clear and timely manner preferably at or before the time of enrolment. (Note: an exception to this might be due to costs not being known at the start of the programme due to legislation changes etc.)
- 3.5** Fees will be remitted where students meet certain conditions identified by the relevant funding body. The conditions are summarised in the Fee Appendix.
- 3.6** Monies will be due at the time of enrolment unless payment by instalments is approved, Learners are awaiting their final assessment from Student Loans Company or the Learner provides evidence that their employer has agreed to pay the fees.
- 3.7** In cases referred to in 3.6. The learner must complete and sign the appropriate liability form stating that they accept liability for the full amount of fees due.
- 3.8** Fees for programmes of study which last for more than one year are payable separately for each year of study. A learner should not be enrolled on a subsequent year of a programme or course if monies are still owed to the College from the previous year.
- 3.9** All fees due should be paid before the learner can be entered for any examination or registered with an awarding body.
- 3.10** Where there are fees still outstanding and the College is holding a certificate for a learner then the learner should be invited to personally call into the College and collect the certificate and settle any sums outstanding.
- 3.11** Partial or full-fee refunds will only be made in specified circumstances identified within the fees guidance (see the Fees Appendix).
- 3.12** To balance the expectation of increased contributions from individuals and employers with ensuring access to education and training, the College reserves the right to amend fees in-year in response to local market forces on the authority of the Principal and Chief Executive.
- 3.13** The College will ensure that fees and any measures to support learners' attendance and achievement are maintained at levels which are both attractive within the market and are financially viable.

## **Adult Skills Budget Provision Grant via the Department for Education (“DFE”)**

- 3.14** The current rules issued by the DFE (on which this Fees Policy is based) are dated July 2025. These rules can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-skills-fund-funding-rules/adult-skills-fund-funding-rules-2025-to-2026#whats-new-in-the-asf-funding-rules-for-2025-to-2026>

## **Adult Skills Budget Provision Procured via the West Midlands Combined Authority (“WMCA”)**

- 3.15** Adult Skills Fund (ASB) funding in parts of the West Midlands under the jurisdiction of the WMCA has been devolved to the WMCA. The College has been awarded a contract for 2026/27 and is classified as an outlying college.
- 3.16** As the devolved funding system is relatively new, the WMCA have opted to align mostly with DFE funding eligibility, rates and entitlements.
- 3.17** Provision funded by ASB from the WMCA will therefore be subject to funding rules issued by WMCA, which can be found at (version 4): <https://www.wmca.org.uk/media/arwdp24h/2024-25-wmca-skills-programmes-funding-rules-v4.pdf>

## **Free Courses for Jobs Offer via the DFE**

- 3.18** The Free Courses for Jobs Offer has a limited range of level 3 courses which can be accessed for free to a wider range of individuals than standard ASF allows. The Offer was extended in August 2025 to include some Level 2 Construction courses.
- 3.19** The Offer provides additional eligibility for learners to access Level 3 courses, particularly those on low wages (earning less than £25,750 per annum) or unemployed regardless of prior academic attainment i.e. even if they already have a level 3.
- 3.20** The list of eligible qualifications is restricted and a list of these qualifications can be found here: <https://www.qualifications.education.gov.uk/Search?Status=All&Offer=9>

## **Adult Learner Loans via the DFE**

- 3.21** Adult learner loans are provided by the Student Loans Company.
- 3.22** Fee collection from the learner may be delayed if the Student Loans Company prior to the start of the course has not processed the financial assessment. Learners must produce proof that an application to the Student Loans Company has been made and is in process.
- 3.23** If proof that you are applying for a loan cannot be produced by December 2025, the College will request that the full fee be invoiced or the student be withdrawn from the course.

**3.24** Learners who withdraw and are subject to Learner Loans will normally have their instalment payments to the College from the Student Loans Company retained by the College. If a Learner Loan had not been approved prior to withdrawal, the College will invoice for fees based on the Refund Policy.

### **Employer Training Fees**

**3.25** Employer training fees are generally provided by the learner's employer.

**3.26** Tuition fees for the workplace are based on contracts commercially negotiated by the Apprenticeship and Employer Engagement Department or Faculties.

**3.27** Negotiated pricing and total contract arrangements should be agreed with a member of ELT prior to commencement.

### **SWAPs**

**3.28** These schemes are led by the Job Centre Plus and include training, work experience and a guaranteed job interview with an emphasis on filling local job vacancies.

**3.29** The pre-employment training is funded through ASF local flexibilities and will normally last 2-3 weeks.

**3.30** Negotiated pricing and total contract arrangements should be agreed with a member of ELT prior to commencement.

### **Apprenticeship – Co-investment**

**3.31** Co-investment is when employers share the cost of training and assessing apprentices with the government. Employers who are not Levy paying organisations will be required to pay 5% of the total cost of training.

**3.32** Co-investment payments are invoiced direct to the employer upon the apprentice start date and should be paid within 30 days of invoice.

### **Higher Education Fees**

**3.33** Full time tuition fees for Higher Education courses are determined by the individual institution at up to £9,250. The College does not have its own arrangements with the Office for Students (OfS) and instead works through third party universities. The College charges up to £5,950 per year for full time courses.

**3.34** The College has decided to charge tuition fees based on discussions with partners and assessing the local market.

- 3.35** Part time courses are charged a fee based on the number of units or hours as a proportion of the full time tuition fee.
- 3.36** Learners need to apply for financial assistance from the Student Loans Company before their course starts.
- 3.37** Fee collection from the learner may be delayed if the Student Loans Company prior to the start of the course has not processed the financial assessment. Learners must produce proof that an application to the Student Loans Company has been made.
- 3.38** If proof cannot be produced by December 2024, the College may request that the full fee be invoiced directly or the student be withdrawn.
- 3.39** Learners who have a Sponsor or Employer paying course costs on their behalf will need a headed letter from the Employer or Sponsor when registering. An invoice will be sent to the sponsor/employer within one month of the learner starting the course.

### **Community Learning and Pound Plus**

- 3.40** Courses are funded by the DFE and in order to receive this money, we must ensure that public funding is focused on people who need it most, those least likely to participate in learning. We therefore collect fees from people who can afford to pay, unless otherwise prescribed by the DFE, and use these to extend provision to those who cannot. In addition, we will look to increase the value of funding received for Community Learning using the principles of Pound Plus.
- 3.41** Pound Plus is a term used by the DFE to describe additional income or added value generated by providers of adult education over and above the core Adult Education Budget. It is important because generating additional income allows the College to maximise the value of public investment and increase the service we can provide to residents.
- 3.42** Pound Plus can include fees income, use of volunteers, donations of equipment or consumables, lower rate or free accommodation or the use of shared resources.
- 3.43** The College has a full statement on Pound Plus in Community Learning on its website.

### **Schools 14-16 Provision**

- 3.44** The College works with a number of local schools to provide vocational options for their learners. The College operates a £85.00 per group flat rate for all types of provision which is run from the College's premises.
- 3.45** The College may need to charge a participating school additional charges for materials, PPE and other requirements depending on the provision being undertaken.

### **Fee Support**

**3.46** For learners with financial hardship there are various types of financial support options that may be able to fund elements of their tuition and other fees. These options are covered in more details in the College's FE Bursary Policy but can be summarised as:

- Discretionary Learner Support Funds.
- Advanced Learner Loan bursary.
- FE and HE Student Loans

### **Discounts**

**3.47** The College offers discounts on adult tuition fees in some cases. Only potential learners with who meet the criteria below can take advantage of the savings,

**3.48** The College offers a 50% discount to staff who want to take any DFE funded or full cost course through South Staffs College.

**3.49** As part of our commitment to the Armed Forces Covenant, the College offers a discount of 25% to former service members who are taking a course funded by the DFE or a full cost course.

**3.50** The College may, from time to time, offer discounted or free courses as part of marketing campaigns with the authorisation of a member of ELT.

## **4.0 Responsibilities**

### **Governors**

**4.1** The Corporation will be responsible for: -

- The Corporation is required to set a policy by which the tuition and other fees payable to the college are determined, subject to any terms and conditions attached to grants, loans or other payments paid or made by the funding bodies
- Secure the efficient, economical and effective management of all the College's resources and expenditure, capital assets and equipment and staff, so that investment of public funds in the College is not put at risk;

### **Chief Executive Principal/Deputy Chief Executive**

**4.2** The Deputy Chief Executive is responsible for: -

- The breadth and character of the College's provision;
- Agreeing employer training fee levels;
- Agreeing employer training refund arrangements.

### **Deputy Principal Finance & Resources**

**4.3** The Deputy Principal Finance & Resources is responsible for: -

- Production and maintenance of the Fees Policy on an annual basis;
- Responsibility for the accurate monitoring and receipt of course costs, charges and other financial information;
- Agreement to certain types of non-standard course cost frameworks such as international course costs;
- Ensuring that financial policies are adhered to.

### **Directors of Faculty, Curriculum Managers**

**4.4** Directors of Faculty and Curriculum Managers will be responsible for: -

- Correct interpretation and execution of the Policy in business planning and enrolment;
- Use of the Policy to ensure that learners receive correct initial advice and guidance (IAG) on financial requirements when enquiring about or starting on a course;
- Passing on information on material costs to interested parties such as Student Finance and Finance.

### **Senior Leadership Team (SLT)**

**4.5** SLT will be responsible for: -

- Correct interpretation and execution of the Policy in business planning and enrolment;
- Use of the Policy to ensure that learners receive correct initial advice and guidance (IAG)

on financial requirements when enquiring about or starting on a course;

- Passing on information on material costs to interested parties such as Student Finance and Finance.

## **All Staff**

**4.6** All staff will be responsible for: -

- Imparting accurate financial IAG on course costs to prospective and new learners;
- Observing refund policies when dealing with withdrawing learners.
- Maintaining proper records of transactions and contracts, particularly in relation to income;
- Reporting any matter which involves, or may involve, financial irregularities to the Deputy Principal Finance & Resources or the Chief Executive Principal, or via the College's Whistleblowing Policy.

## 5.0 Refunds Policy

- 5.1 The College does not refund tuition fees if a learner simply decides to stop attending a course.
- 5.2 A full refund of fees may be awarded to a student in the event of the College cancelling a course on which that student has enrolled and no alternative course is suitable or if the student withdraws from a course due to any of the reasons below before the course has commenced;
- A student is unable to attend the course due to an change to the time at which it is scheduled or to the location at which it will take place;
  - A student has a serious medical condition (medical certificate required as evidence);
  - An entitlement error is made following incorrect assessment at the time of enrolment, or;
  - A cooling off period of 14 days from date of registration.

- 5.3 Should a student withdraw from a course after the course start date or fail to attend the course on which they have enrolled they will only be entitled to a full refund (including tuition, materials, registration and exam fees) on the following basis:

Course Length	Time Period
Under 6 weeks	No attendance on course
6-24 weeks	Withdraws within 14 days of course start date
Over 24 weeks	Withdraws within 42 days of course start date

- 5.4 A student has the right to appeal in writing for a refund to the Assistant Principal of Curriculum & Quality or the Assistant Principal Learner Services, who will consider each individual request on its specific merits in line with the Complaints Policy. The Assistant Principals may decide to award a partial refund based upon the number of weeks attended and the specific circumstances that have led to the student withdrawing from the course.
- 5.5 If a refund is issued after an appeal, a £20 administration will be charged.
- 5.6 Refunds will normally be returned on a pro-rata basis, based on the proportion of the course completed, unless the grounds for refund are due to Quality, in which case the full course fees can be refunded if deemed necessary.
- 5.7 Any refunds agreed will be refunded by the same method as the original payment to the person or organisation making the payment. If paid by cash, a bank account will need to be provided.
- 5.8 In the event of a refund being authorised, exam and registration fees will only be refunded if they have not already been paid to the relevant Examinations Board.
- 5.9 Refunds for employer related provision should be granted on the same grounds as described for classroom related provision, however the College accepts that in some cases other commercial arrangements may be put in place as an alternative to a refund. These arrangements should be agreed by the Deputy Chief Executive.

## **6.0 Other Fees**

### **Room Hire**

- 6.1** The College can hire out teaching rooms to third parties when such rooms are free and available. Rooms would not normally be hired out during normal weekday operating hours to avoid safeguarding and overcrowding issues.
- 6.2** Basic teaching classrooms are hired out at a rate of £30.00 per room per hour.
- 6.3** IT rooms are hired out at a rate of £45.00 per room per hour.
- 6.4** Other types of room and facilities can be hired out and prices can be negotiated based on requirement and use.
- 6.5** Hiring parties would be expected to provide their own liability insurance and risk assessments.
- 6.6** Where the College wishes to support a charity or sees a room letting as a potential marketing opportunity, the Principal and CEO has the authority to waive fees.

### **Rodbaston Hostels**

- 6.7** The College has a limited number of hostel rooms available at its Rodbaston site. These can be booked through Estates for £10.00 per night. Bedding and towels are not included.

## **7.0 Monitoring and Review**

- 7.1** The College will review this Policy annually. This review will take place in January, and any policy revisions will be completed and published prior to the completion of the curriculum planning cycle for the subsequent year.
- 7.2** The internal monitoring of the implementation of this Policy will be the responsibility of the Deputy Principal Finance & Resources.
- 7.3** The responsibility for ensuring that this Policy, and its associated processes and procedures, remain appropriate and comply with changes in legislation will be held by the Deputy Principal Finance & Resources.

## Fee Appendix (2026/27)

Type Programme/Level	Fee
<b>Full Time</b> – Entry to Level 2 courses	Fully Funded – FREE Co Funded - £1,000 (includes all subsidiary aims & awarding body registration fee)
<b>Full Time</b> – Level 3 Programmes	Maximum weighted loan rate (as defined by LARS) unless legal entitlement or Level 3 Adult Offer (Free Courses for Jobs)
<b>Part Time</b> – Classroom based provision (Entry, Level 1 and Level 2 courses)	Fully Funded – FREE Co Funded - 50% of un-weighted funding value + material and awarding body fee
<b>Part Time</b> – Classroom based provision (Level 3 & 4)	Maximum weighted loan rate (as defined by LARS) unless legal entitlement or Level 3 Adult Offer (Free Courses for Jobs)
Higher Education Programmes	Refer to individual programme price
English & Maths Qualifications (GCSE or Functional Skill) plus Essential Digital Skills	FREE if learner <b>does not</b> have GCSE grade A*-C / 9-4 or above
Adult Community Learning Provision	Charged at a minimum of £11.00 per hour
Other Full Cost Provision	Charged at a minimum of £11.00 per hour Commercially viable rate depending on class sizes and resources needed

## Remission Categories

Description	Fees Reduced by
16-18 year old learner	100%
Unemployed	100%
Essential Digital Skills	100%
English Or Maths	100%
Fees Waived - College Policy	As authorized
First Full Level 2 Legal Entitlement 19-23 year olds	100%
First Full Level 3 Legal Entitlement 19-23 year olds	100%
Level 3 Adult Offer (Free Course for Jobs)	100%
ASL Early Bird Incentive 5% Discount	5%
ASL 50% Remission Staff Only	50%
Armed Forces 25% Remission	25%
Progression (to support progression to level 2)	100%
Low Income below £25,750 - Non-WMCA Residents £34,194 – WMCA Residents – <i>Updated 24 June 2025</i>	100%

## 2025/26 Department for Education - Fee Guidance Grid

Provision	16-18 year olds (19-24 High Needs EFA Funded)	19-23 year olds other	19-23 year olds Unemployed or Low Wage	24+ Unemployed or Low Wage	24+ Other
<b>Level 1 Provision</b>	Fully Funded (Waiver 01)	Fully Funded Tuition (For provision to support progression to level 2) (Available only to those with prior attainment less than level 2) (Waiver 87)	Fully Funded (Waiver 04)	Fully Funded (Waiver 04)	Full Time Course Co- Funded £1,000
		Fully Funded if unemployed or employed and earning less than *£25,750 per annum (Waiver 91)			
<b>Level 2* Provision (Full time or equivalent) *Qualifications listed as legal entitlement only</b>	Fully Funded (Waiver 01)	First Full Level 2 Legal Entitlement Fully Funded Tuition (Waiver 22)	Fully Funded (Waiver 04)	Fully Funded (Waiver 04)	Co-Funded £1,000
		Co Funded £1,000			
		Fully Funded if unemployed or employed and earning less than *£25,750 per annum (Waiver 91)			
<b>Level 3 Provision *Qualifications listed as legal entitlement only</b>	Fully Funded (Waiver 01)	First Full Level 3 Legal entitlement Fully Funded (Waiver 24)	First Full Level 3 Legal entitlement Fully Funded (Waiver 24)	First Full Level 3 Legal entitlement Fully Funded (Waiver 24)	Adult Loan / Full Fee
		Adult Loan / Full Fee (ADL Weighted rate)	Adult Loan / Full Fee (ADL Weighted rate)	Adult Loan / Full Fee (ADL Weighted rate)	
<b>Level 3 Adult Offer *Qualifications listed as FCFJ Adult Offer</b>	Fully Funded (Waiver 01)	First Full Level 3 Legal entitlement Fully Funded (Waiver 24)	Level 3 Adult Offer (Waiver 06)	Level 3 Adult Offer (Waiver 06)	Level 3 Adult Offer (Waiver 06)
<b>Level 4 / 5 Provision</b>	N/A	Adult Loan / Full Fee (ADL weighted rate)	Adult Loan / Full Fee	Adult Loan / Full Fee	Adult Loan / Full Fee
<b>English &amp; Maths / Digital Only Qualifications (For learners with below grade C / 4)</b>	Fully Funded – No Fee (Waiver 01)	Fully Funded – No Fee (Waiver 09)	Fully Funded – No Fee (Waiver 09)	Fully Funded – No Fee (Waiver 09)	Fully Funded – No Fee (Waiver 09)