

Fee Policy

1. SCOPE

- 1.1 This policy statement details how The Sixth Form College Birkenhead will apply fees for courses funded by the Education Funding Agency (EFA), the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) and those courses that receive no grant funding.
- 1.2 In exceptional circumstances approval may be sought from the Assistant Principal (Learner Services and Adult) and Director of Finance, to set fees outside the guidance of this policy prior to commencement of the course, or to waive or amend the requirements for individual learner circumstances.

2. DISCLAIMER

- 2.1 The College reserves the right to change or amend, at any time, any of the course details including content, dates, times, venues, fees payable, concessions available, terms or conditions. The College also reserves the right to close or not to start any published course.

3. FEE STRUCTURE

- 3.1 **Adult & Community (A&C) Courses:** The overall fee structure for all A&C courses is proposed by the Assistant Principal (Learner Services and Adult) for approval by SMT. Once agreed the Assistant Principal (Learner Services and Adult) is responsible for setting the detailed fees. Key considerations are the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) fee assumptions, affordability and equity when making the decision.
- 3.2 **Fees for Overseas Full-time Students:** Fees for overseas students will be decided in advance of the academic year by the Assistant Principal (Learner Services and Adult) in consultation with SMT. These fees include an extra element for English Language tuition should that be necessary. Additional services provided by the College may incur additional charges. Current fee levels are available on the website.

4. EFA/SFA FEE REMISSION

- 4.1 EFA / SFA consider the following groups of students to be eligible for full fee remission (those students returning for the second year of a two year course will continue to receive fee remission on the same basis as for their first year):
 - those aged 16-18
 - adults taking specific English and Maths qualifications
 - adults in receipt of specific income related benefits
 - eligible adults aged 19-23 taking their first full level 2 qualification or first full level 3 qualification
 - eligible adults aged 19 -23 taking Entry or Level 1 qualifications (not English or Maths)

5. COURSE FEE ELIGIBILITY

- 5.1 **16 –19 Students:** All students who are aged 16, 17 or 18 on the 31st August in the year of the start of their programme of study and eligible for Education Funding Agency (EFA) funding (as defined in the Funding Guidance Document) will pay no tuition fees for EFA funded full and part-time courses.

- 5.2 **16-19 Students Not Eligible for Funding:** Overseas students who are not eligible for EFA funding (as directed in the Funding Guidance Document) will be charged tuition fees at a rate determined by the College and published in advance.
- 5.3 **Foundation Course:** Students who are not fully funded (as determined by the relevant funding body guidelines) are required to pay a fee of £800 towards the cost of the course.
- 5.4 **Adult Students:** Students who are 19 or over on the 31st August in the year of the start of their programme of study and are eligible for SFA funding (as defined in the Funding Rules Document) will be charged fees at the rates published unless they are eligible for fee remission as listed below. In these circumstances tuition fees will be remitted in full.
- 19-23 year old learners studying their first full Level 2 qualification
 - 19-23 year old learners studying their first full Level 3 qualification
 - Level 3 jumpers of all ages (those taking a full Level 3 without having a full Level 2 qualification)
 - learners who do not currently have A*-C grade in GCSE English and/or Maths
 - those people who are on Job Seekers Allowance (JSA) or Employment Support Allowance (ESA – Work related)
 - learners actively seeking employment
 - other benefits may qualify for fee remission (check with the College for the current list)

Adult learners aged 24 and above will be able to apply for a 24+ Advanced Learning Loan which will cover the cost of accredited course fees and other equipment necessary to complete the course.

Fees for students on full-time courses may be waived at the discretion of the College. The final decision is made by the Assistant Principal (Learner Services and Adult).

- 5.5 **Students of Compulsory School Age:** Students of compulsory school age who follow a part-time course offered under A&C will be charged tuition fees according to rates decided and publicised before each launch period. Students of compulsory school age will only be allowed to follow a full-time course in exceptional circumstances. Fees for such students, if any, will be determined on a case-by-case basis by the Assistant Principal (Learner Services and Adult).
- 5.6 **Employees of the College:** Employees who wish to follow an A&C course at the College will have their tuition fee remitted in full if their line manager approves the course and there are places available.
- 5.7 **Overseas Students**
- 5.71 International students (those from outside the EU/EEA) will be charged a fee. There are 2 classifications of International Students:
- a) students who do not require a visa to reside in the UK but do not qualify for funding and
 - b) students who do require a visa to study in the UK Tier 4 (general) or Tier 4 (child)
- The fees charged will include the cost of the first attempt of any approved examination cost with any subsequent attempts payable at the full rate
- 5.72 All full-time Tier 4 international students must pay at least 50% of the fees before a CAS can be assigned. A further 25% is payable on enrolment with any remaining fees to be paid at the start of the second term.

- 5.73 All international students who do not require a Tier 4 visa must pay at least 50% of the fees on enrolment. The remainder to be paid prior to the first session of the second term of study.
- 5.74 In exceptional circumstances (such as existing students part-way through a programme of study) payment by instalments may be permitted although there can be no more than three instalments. All such cases require the approval of the Director of Finance, for which a track record of making payments (existing students) or evidence of ability to pay will be needed.

6. PAYMENT TERMS

- 6.1 All fees are normally payable at enrolment prior to the start of the course.
- 6.2 Students (with the exception of international Tier 4 students) with total fees of over £400 may request to pay in up to three instalments. However, the following will apply:
- the first instalment must be 50% of total fee
 - the course(s) must run for a minimum of two terms
 - the first instalment will be payable at enrolment prior to the start of the course
 - all instalment agreements must be settled five months prior to the planned end of the course
- 6.3 Adult Learners aged 24+ studying Level 3 courses at the College will no longer be co-funded by the SFA. UK and EU Learners will be able to apply for 24+ Advanced Learning Loans (ALLS) for approved SFA courses from the Student Loans Company.
- 6.4 24+ Loans will be paid directly to the College by the Student Loans Company; liability will be incurred after the student has attended their course for 2 weeks and on a monthly basis thereafter.
- 6.5 If the learner decides to apply for a loan, providers must supply information through a Learning and Funding application letter to assist the learner in making the loans application. The Learning and Funding information letter will include the following:
- UK Provider Reference Number (UKPRN)
 - Learning aim reference number
 - Learning aim title
 - Apprenticeship Framework name/code, level and pathway code
 - Learning aim start /end date
 - Fee charged to the learner
 - Maximum amount of loan available for the learning aim/Apprenticeship framework as published on LARA (where the fee exceeds this)
 - Assumed Employer Contribution (where applicable)
- 6.6 If a student is loan funded, they must sign an agreement at the time of their enrolment to confirm that if they withdraw from their course of study for any reason after the initial two weeks liability period, they will be liable to pay the balance of the fees for the academic year that is no longer covered by their student loan.

7. LEISURE COURSES or FULL COST RECOVERY COURSES

- 7.1 Fees for Leisure Courses and full cost recovery courses will be decided by Assistant Principal (Learner Services & Adult) and Director of Finance.

7.2 Fees are to be based on market rates and must at least recover full costs including overheads and therefore will differ between courses. All leisure and full cost recovery courses need to achieve the target financial contribution unless agreed by the Assistant Principal (Learner Services & Adult).

8. REFUNDS

8.1 Home Students

Refunds may be approved in the following circumstances:

- If the College cancels a course, or the course does not start due to lack of support, every effort will be made to offer an alternative. If no suitable alternative is available, a full refund will be given.
- If learners withdraw from their programme within two weeks of the course start date, they may apply for a full refund, less the registration fee.
- Once a learner attends the second week of their course refunds will not normally be given and all amounts outstanding remain payable.
- Written requests for refunds relating to exceptional personal factors will be considered by the Assistant Principal (Learner Services & Adult).
- Below are some examples of circumstance that would, or would not, be considered for a refund. The list is neither exhaustive nor exclusive and each circumstance is considered on an individual basis.

Circumstances that may be considered exceptional:

- Severe illness or injury that necessitates the learner being away from College and unable to complete their studies, and is supported by medical certificate and the curriculum Head of Department.

Circumstances that would not be considered exceptional

- Difficulties with childcare arrangements
- Changing jobs and/or moving away
- Loss of employment
- Emigrating

Excluded students - No refunds or credit notes will be made where a learner has been excluded from the College due to a breach of the Student Code of Conduct and all amounts outstanding remain payable.

8.2 Overseas Students

International (Tier 4) Students, who have paid fees and are subsequently refused permission to enter the United Kingdom before commencing their course or, their permission is granted too late for them to enrol onto the programme, will be entitled to a full refund less a 25% administration charge. Written evidence from the Home Office, Embassy or High Commission confirming refusal of the visa application, or late permission, will be required (original documents only – no photocopies).

Students who have commenced their course are not eligible to a refund. However, if the UKBA withdraw permission to stay in the UK (for non Tier 4 students only), fees may be deferred to the following academic year, based on the number of full terms remaining, less a £100 administration charge.

Students who have withdrawn from the course due to medical/personal/family issues will be assessed on a case by case basis. Evidence of extenuating circumstances may be requested.