

Fees Policy



LANCASTER & MORECAMBE COLLEGE

Date: September 2024



Lancaster &
Morecambe
College

Policy name: Fees Policy

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Notes:	

FEES POLICY 2024/25

Introduction

This paper sets out the College's fees policy for 2024/2025 and for HE provision to 2025/26.

Background

Some groups of learners receive free tuition and are not required to pay fees, for example;

- 16-18 learners.
- Unemployed learners seeking employment in receipt of certain eligible benefits.
- Learners that meet eligibility rules studying on a Level 2 or 3 course with entitlement. 19-24 learners with an education health care plan (EHCP).
- Some 16-18 Apprentices.
- 19+ learners studying at L3 under the National Skills Offer

The above learners do not pay fees and the College receives the fully funded rate from the EFSA. For other groups of learners, the College is expected to charge a fee.

The College receives a 'co-funded' rate from the EFSA for adult learners not entitled to free tuition. Currently, the co-funded rate is 50% of the national fee rate. Providers are expected to charge the remaining 50% as a fee.

In practice, most providers do not charge the full co-funded fee as this would make the cost of courses excessive and would have a negative impact on learner recruitment.

Current Fee Levels

For 2024/25, the College's Fee Policy is summarised as follows:

Type of Provision	Fee Rate
Part Time Courses	£1.80p/h based on c50% of the co-funded fee. For certain 'premium' courses where there is high demand and limited capacity the college may opt to charge a higher fee in line with the prevailing market rate.
Adult Full Time Courses	Flat fee of £250 including registration costs.
College Discretionary Remission	£25 fee. This charge is applied to learners that are not seeking employment, that are in receipt of benefits qualifying benefits (e.g. tax credits, income support, JSA). For these learners only a notional fee is charged and the College does not receive the co-funded rate.

Apprenticeships	If a fee is payable by the employer the College charges a fee based on the appropriate band set by the DFE for the relevant framework or standard. This fee is negotiated with the employer in advance of the programme starting.
Full Cost Courses	These courses attract no public funding. Fees are charged on an individual basis to achieve an economic return to the College.
Higher Education	Full Time Fee is £5,500 for 2024/25 and the 2025/26 fee has previously been approved by the Corporation at £5,500. Most learners pay this via a student loan. Some HE provision is delivered to employers on a commercial basis as would be the case for full cost courses (above).

2024/25 Fees

Full Time Adult Fees

It is proposed to maintain the time fee at £250 to ensure or provision is affordable and to maintain and encourage more enrolments in order to fully utilise the adult allocation. At this level our adult full-time fees are competitive compared to other local providers.

Part Time Adult Fees

Part-time adult courses will generally be made up of different cohorts of adults; some will qualify for full funding, some may be loan funded and some may be co-funded.

For those learners required to pay a fee it is proposed to increase the standard part-time fee by 6.5% to £1.92 p/h to cover increased costs arising from staff and non-pay cost increases. This would represent 32% of the new adult funding base rate of £6 p/h which is less than the 50% co-funded rate the college is expected to charge.

The College does offer a number of 'premium' courses that are in high demand and often over-subscribed. In addition, some provision, e.g. Welding, incurs significant materials costs. For these courses the College may charge a higher fee to more closely reflect market rates and the cost of delivery. In such cases the fee charged will not exceed the 50% co-funded rate.

College Discretionary Remission

It is proposed that this fee remains at £25. This fee only applies to a small cohort of learners.

Apprenticeships

A compulsory fee is payable by employers for certain categories of Apprenticeship provision. Other categories, such as apprentices employed by SME's are exempt from fees.

Where the fee is applicable it has been set by the DFE as 5% of the cost of training negotiated with the employer. This value must not exceed the top of the funding band for the relevant framework / standard.

The College will continue to negotiate fees on an individual basis with employers.

Level 3 Learners 19+

Learners that are not be eligible for ESFA funding can apply for a student loan through the Student Loans Company.

Such learners could be studying full or part time College based courses or work placed NVQs.

The College will normally charge a fee equivalent to the national funding rates applicable to the programme the learner is studying. This rate will be derived from the government 'Find a Learning Aim' database. This fee is occasionally capped at £5000 to maintain a differential with HE fees.

Higher Education – Full Cost Learners

HE fees are set two years in advance. The fee set for 2024/25 is £5,500.

It is proposed to increase the HE fee to £5,850 for new HE learners enrolling in 2022/26. This increase equates to 6.4% which reflects staffing and non-pay cost increases incurred by the College. This will enable the College to make an adequate contribution whilst maintaining a significant differential to the £9,250 charged by Universities. This fee will remain competitive relative to other local Colleges.

14-16 Fees

The College has experienced significant growth in its 14-16 provision and as such, fees for the provision will be formally set within this fees policy (previously agreed by local negotiation).

Fees charged for 14-16 provision in 2024/25 will be:

- Group rate - £100 p/h up to a maximum group size of 10 with the school to provide support as required.
- Individual rate for full time placement (3 days per week) - £6,500
- Individual rate for part time infill into an existing class - £30 p/h
- In class support - £20 p/h and £30 p/h for one to one support.

Local Position

Due to the complexity of adult funding, it is very difficult to compare fees between providers on a like for like basis. However, from a review of college websites and published information, we consider the proposed fees to be competitive compared to other local providers.

Summary

The above proposals are designed to maintain and encourage more adult enrolments to maximise co-funding and utilise the Adult Skills Fund whilst ensuring our provision is affordable for our community.

POLICY/PROCEDURE IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Wherever possible in responding to these questions, be specific and name organisations, individuals and or equality categories: Race; gender; age; disability; religion; faith; sexual orientation.

Name of policy / function being assessed:

Fees policy

Name of manager/group carrying out the assessment:

PETER FRANCE

Is this a new or existing policy/procedure?

Existing

STAGE 1

Wherever possible quote directly from policy/procedure documentation

1 Identify main aims of the policy/procedure

1.1 What is the aim, objective or purpose of the policy/procedure?

The aim of the policy is set out the college's strategy for charging tuition fees.

1.2 Are there associated aims of the policy/procedure? What are they?

The associated aim of the policy is to balance the need to charge fees against learner recruitment and affordability.

1.3 What are you trying to achieve through the policy/procedure and why?

We are trying to ensure that there is a clear and transparent methodology for charging tuition fees which takes account of Government policy.

1.4 Who are the main stakeholders and who is responsible for the policy/procedure?

The main stakeholders are the Corporation, Senior Management Team, College Staff, Funding Bodies and Learners.

The Vice Principal Finance and Resources is responsible for preparing the policy which is subsequently approved by both the Senior Leadership Team and the Corporation.

1.5 Who is intended to benefit from the policy/procedure and in what way?

The intended beneficiaries are staff and learners as the policy is intended to provide a clear methodology for setting tuition fees.

1.6 How do the policy/procedure outcomes help or hinder other organisational objectives, policies or values?

The policy objectives are to enable the college to generate fee income in line with government targets and to help the college remain financially viable. The policy attempts to balance this requirement against the needs of learners and the affordability of courses.

1.7 Is the responsibility for the writing or monitoring of the policy/procedure shared with any other department or authority/organisation? If so what responsibility and which other parties?

The policy is approved by SLT and Corporation.

2 Information Collection

2.1 What information/data is available on the impact of this policy/procedure? When and how is it collected?

Fee income and learner numbers are monitored on a monthly basis.

2.2 If gaps are identified in the data available; what records, data or information are you likely to need to develop and monitor an effective policy/procedure that benefits all groups equally?

No gaps identified.

3 Relevance of policy/procedure

3.1 Will the policy/procedure involve or have consequences for the people the College serves and employs?

Yes, it will have a consequence for those learners liable to pay tuition fees.

3.2 In what areas are there concerns that the policy/procedure could have a differential impact (please tick)

AGE DISABILITY GENDER ALL
RELIGION/BELIEF RACE SEXUALITY

None – the policy applies to all learners.

Differential charges do apply to different age groups. This however is determined by national government policy and is outside the Colleges control.

3.3 What sort of concern is there that the policy/procedure could have a differential impact on these groups? Please give details (continue overleaf if necessary)

Some learners are exempt from paying fees as a result of government legislation and funding body policy – i.e. learner's under 19 or learners in receipt of certain benefits. These exemptions apply equally to all above listed groups.

3.4 What evidence do you have for this?

N/A

3.5 What are the risks associated with the policy in relation to the differential / adverse impact?

No risks identified as the policy applies to all groups.

3.6 Please sign and date Initial Impact Assessment

Peter France

13/05/2024

3.7 Only proceed to Full IA if you have identified that there is, or could be, differential/adverse impact.