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Fee Policy 2025-26

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Introduction

This summary paper outlines the fee policy for the college for the 2021-22 academic year. Annex A provides an explanation of the terms and acronyms used in this document.

1. Courses which lead to a qualification (Accredited Learning)

- a. Learners who are eligible for **full funding** from the ESFA will not be charged a fee for any aspect of the course, including exams, resources or awarding organisation registration fees. In this scenario the college will draw down 100% of the funding allocation as set by the ESFA. Full eligibility criteria is available on request.
- b. Learners who are eligible for **co-funding** as specified by the ESFA will be funded at a rate of 50% with a maximum of the other 50% being paid by the learner or employer. At the discretion of the college, some courses may be charged at less than 50% for the learner.
- c. Learners who are employed or self-employed, and would normally be co-funded studying a qualification up to and including level 2 may be eligible for full funding providing they earn less than £25,000 annual gross salary.
- d. Learners who are not eligible for **funding or bursary** will pay the full course fee. In this instance the college draws down no funding from the ESFA.
- e. Accredited courses or learners that are not eligible for any public funding will be charged a course fee of up to £15.00 per hour plus the cost of qualification accreditation (exam fees). We reserve the right to amend fees to reflect market rates on courses for learners that are not eligible for funding.
- f. The college will provide financial assistance from a Discretionary Learning Support Fund (for those aged 19+) to assist with cases of hardship related to,

for example, childcare (for those aged 20+) and transport, according to ESFA regulations.

2.Accredited courses (those leading to a qualification) at Level 3 and above.

Many level 3 qualifications now form part of a legal entitlement for learners who do not already have a full level 3 qualification. Courses will be free if these conditions are met.

- a. Where qualifications are not on the legal entitlement list or a learner already holds a full level 3 qualification, fees will be set at funding rates advised by the ESFA. We reserve the right to set some fees lower than ESFA published rates to take into account local market conditions. Learners may also qualify for the following dependant on the course and level:
 - Advanced Learner Loan
 - The lifelong loan entitlement (not currently available – Mar 2023).
- b. Some qualifications are eligible for an Advanced Learner Loans - Learning loans are available for learners aged 19 and over, wishing to study at Level 3 or above.
 - Household income is not taken into account and there is no credit check involved.
- c. Learners will not have to pay anything back until they are earning over £25,000 a year effective from 1 August 2023.
 - Learners must have lived in the UK for a minimum of 3 years to apply.

Learning loans are the learner's responsibility, and should you withdraw from your course two weeks or more after the start date, you will be liable for paying any outstanding fees to the college and for the repayment of your loan.

3.SEN Programmes

- a. Made up of small discrete classes for adults with learning disabilities which lead to the achievement of personal goals.
- b. Provision is delivered in main centres and within the community.
These courses fully funded by the ESFA with no chargeable fee to the learner.

4.Family Learning

4a. Courses that offer you the opportunity to learn together and to build strong relationships, develop new skills and raise aspirations for all the family. The courses available include English, English for speakers of other languages (ESOL), maths, arts & crafts, steps into pre-school & nursery, school readiness, steps into secondary school, online safety, understanding children and managing behaviour.

- The majority of Family learning is fully funded in line with identified locality need and run in partnership with school or local providers.
- Prioritised Family Learning may be eligible for full funding with no fee
- Family Learning Maths, English and Digital Skills are fully funded with no fee
- A variable fee rate may be charged to a specific course for materials
- Full cost recovery courses or partially funded courses may also be run within specialist areas

5. Courses which do not lead to a qualification (Non-accredited Learning) excluding commercial courses

- a. The fee rate per hour varies on the course undertaken and materials required.
- b. For those in receipt of benefits or low income a 60% discount is applicable to the full course fee. The benefit rate is not subject to further discounts.
- c. Learners who are over 65 are entitled to a 20% discount, which may not be used in conjunction with other offers. This concession is designed to support social inclusion and improved mental and physical health.
- d. Prioritised and targeted tailored learning provision may be fully funded.

The college reserves the right to use a formula-funded approach where applicable in accordance with ESFA guidance.

6. Full cost courses

- a. Full cost programmes are not government funded and will be charged at an hourly rate of between **£9.00** and **£18.00**. We reserve the right to amend fees to reflect market rates. There is no concessionary fee on full cost classes.
- b. Minimum numbers of learners on courses will apply to ensure these courses remain financially viable.

7. Discounts and incentives on non-accredited courses

- a. Early Bird – 10% discount available on course fees for enrolments completed within one calendar month after the release of the course brochure.
- b. Returning Learners – 5% discount available on course fees for further enrolment, upon completion of a course, within an academic year
- c. Multi-term enrolment – 15% discount available for enrolling on all termly courses throughout the academic year.

- d. At the discretion of the Principal, specific and targeted discounts or incentives may be agreed and marketed throughout the year up to a value of 20%. Any discounts or incentives over 20% will require prior approval from Southend City Council.

Notes:

- *Maximum of one discount per enrolment*
- *Benefit concessions are not eligible for the above discounts*
- *Commercial courses are not eligible for funded concessions*

8.Courses for employers and businesses

- a. Tailored courses for employers, businesses and charities offered by the college will be costed and charged at a commercial or subsidised rate as set out in the fee policy. Course costs may include exam fees, room hire, refreshments and resources.

9.Online and Blended learning courses

- a. The college is committed to ensuring that we reduce the digital divide and funding may be available to provide access to digital resources to support online and blended learning.
- Fee rates for online and blended learning courses will be dependent on the course and level as set out.

10.Pound Plus

- a. Pound Plus refers to the generation of additional income over and above the core grant funding providers receive from the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) through the Adult Skills Fund (ASF). Pound Plus describes how learning providers demonstrate that they are maximising the value of the public investment into adult education. This can be achieved by either generating additional income or greater efficiency of educational delivery by providing access to learning to more individuals at no extra cost.

In addition to core grant funding the college generates additional income or cost saving in the following:

- By charging a tuition fee with concessions for those on low income or benefits.
- Working with other partners on specific areas of provision or within specific geographical locations to ensure that learning reaches those with the greatest need.
- Use of volunteers.
- Additional income from educational activities working with external partners.
- Non-grant funded full cost courses.

- The social and economic benefits that accrue in communities from social inclusion, reduction in social isolation and improvement in workforce skills at all levels of academic ability.
- Efficient and effective curriculum planning to ensure maximum impact from the learning being delivered.
- Commercial income from rents and lettings.
- Use of blended and distance learning to provide access to learning for those unable to attend one of the college centres.

11. Instalment plans

Instalment plans are available for all, which spreads the cost of the course and will be taken automatically each month.

- a. There is a £15.00 non-refundable fee payable upon enrolment (waived if proof of benefits can be supplied).
- We cannot hold places on courses without payment, therefore your first month's payment will be required upon enrolment.
- b. Instalment plans must be set up in person, as a signature is required and must be paid before the end of your course.

12. Refunds

- a. Following your enrolment there is a 14-day cooling off period, in which you can receive a full refund of any fees paid.
- b. After this date, provided your cancellation is before your second lesson, you can receive a refund, minus a £15 admin fee.
- c. If a cancellation is requested after this date and attributed to exceptional circumstances, a partial refund may be considered by the Senior Leadership Team. If your cancellation is for medical reasons, we can supply a partial refund, once medical evidence has been supplied.
- d. In the unfortunate event of your course being cancelled, a full refund will be issued or you will be given the opportunity to transfer to an alternative course.

13. Exams - External Candidates as shown below

Subject	Fee
GCSE Maths	£200.00
GCSE English	£200.00
GCSE Resits	£200.00

Other Subjects	Enquire
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14. Exams – Resit fees (Internal Candidates)

Subject	Fee
Functional Skills first resit	£0.00
Functional Skills English Reading	£30.00
Functional Skills English Writing	£40.00
Functional Skills Maths	£50.00
AAT Unit	£60.00

Annex A – Explanation of terms and acronyms

Fully-Funded Fees

Where a learner meets the criteria to have their course fully-funded by the Government no fee will be charged for tuition, examinations, registration or anything

else that is necessary for the learner to achieve their course, though the college reserves the right to charge a learner for any extracurricular activities or for materials and services that are not specifically required in order for them to achieve this. Full eligibility criteria is available on request.

Co-Funded Fees

Where a learner meets the criteria to have their course co-funded by the Government a co-funded fee will be charged at the beginning of their course. This fee will include:

- Tuition Fees for all programme elements
- Registration, Examination and Assessment Fees where applicable
- Additional consumables and protective clothing fees may be payable as a requirement of the course (Ancillary fees)

Concessionary Co-funded Fee

Where a learner is in receipt of any of the following means-tested benefits they will be entitled to pay a reduced concessionary co-funded fee upon presentation of documentary evidence where a fully funded fee is unavailable:

- Universal Credit
- Income-related Employment and Support Allowance
- Pension Credit
- Working Tax Credit (earnings below specified limit)
- Council Tax support

Self-Funded Fees

Where either a learner does not meet the criteria to have their course funded by the Government or the course is being run on a purely commercial basis a self-funded fee will be charged at the beginning of the course. This fee will include:

- Tuition Fees for all programme elements
- Registration, Examination and Assessment Fees where applicable
- Additional consumables and protective clothing fees may be payable as a requirement of the course (Ancillary fees)

ESFA

This is the Educational Skills Funding Agency and is the organisation responsible for administering the distribution of Government funding of Further Education.

ASF

The Adult Skills Fund is the generic name given to the funding grants distributed by the ESFA to further education institutions such as the college.