

Fees Policy 2023-24

Responsible Senior Manager: Deputy Principal Finance & Facilities

Effective Date: March 2023

Related Policies:

Approved By: Finance & Estates Committee *

Next Review Date: March 2024

* Under delegated powers

CONTENTS

1. PURPOSE.....	3
2. INTRODUCTION.....	3
3. DEFINITIONS	3
4. SCOPE	3
5. FURTHER EDUCATION CLASSROOM-BASED COURSES	4
6. APPRENTICESHIPS	5
7. HIGHER EDUCATION (HE) FEES.....	6
8. ADVANCED LEARNER LOANS	6
9. FULL COST/COMMERCIAL COURSES	7
10. INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS	7
11. EXAMS, ASSESSMENTS & PROFESSIONAL BODY REGISTRATIONS	7
12. OTHER FEES	8
13. REDUCED FEES	8
14. PAYMENT METHODS	8
15. INSTALMENTS.....	8
16. PAYMENT BY EMPLOYERS OR SPONSORS	9
17. REFUNDS.....	9
18. OUTSTANDING FEES.....	9
19. FEE SETTING APPROACH	10
20. DISPUTES	10

SECTION A: OVERVIEW

1. Purpose

Education transforms lives. HSDC is committed to realising the ambition of our communities by raising aspirations, enabling achievement and fulfilling dreams. In order to achieve this we require funds from a variety of different sources, which includes learner fees. These funds enable us to provide outstanding teaching, learning, support, challenge, assessment facilities and resources to all of our learners.

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear and consistent guidelines for

- Setting and collecting fees
- Fee Refunds and Remission

The policy also provides clarity on the various requirements for different fee types and seeks to ensure that learners are made aware of opportunities to apply for relevant loans or bursaries to assist with fees.

2. Introduction

HSDC recognises that where fees are payable by a learner or employer (fee payer), transparency and awareness of obligations on both sides are integral to the relationship.

This Policy seeks to provide transparency, consistency, and fairness to fee payers affected by the policy for the academic year 2023/24. It aims to inform the decision-making process and support awareness of the College's Terms & Conditions before any commitment is made by fee payers. In instances where a fee is not known at the time of publication it will be made clear that there will be a fee to pay with an estimate where possible of the amount, noting that this estimate may be subject to change.

The Fees Policy is reviewed annually by the Executive Team (ET) and approved by the Finance & Estates Committee prior to the start of the new academic year. The policy may be subject to change in-year.

Disclaimer:

If this Policy does not give sufficient guidance, the reader may also refer to other published sources, including the ESFA Funding Rules or OfS Rules and Limits on fee charges.

3. Definitions

A course can either be stand alone or constitute a component of a study programme which leads to an award of a qualification(s) or College certificate(s).

Fees are defined as money payable by either a learner or third party (employer or sponsor) in return for

- Tuition / course
- Transport
- Examination / Registration
- Course related materials (non-essential only)
- Trips (only non-compulsory course related trips can be charged to learners).

4. Scope

The policy also covers the following areas;

- Reduced fees
- Payment methods
- Instalments
- Payment by employers or sponsors
- Refunds
- Outstanding fees
- Fee setting approach
- Disputes

SECTION B: TYPES OF FEES

HSDC offers courses across various levels, for differing age groups which can attract public funding or are fee financed.

5. Further education classroom-based courses

ESFA 16-19 learners

For learners resident in England aged under 19 on 31 August in the academic year on full or part time ESFA approved courses, generally, **fees are not payable** (full fee remission). In all instances, funding eligibility will be referenced and governed by ESFA 16-19 study programme funding and performance management rules (updated by ESFA as appropriate before the year or in the prevailing academic year). Foreign nationals, must be treated equally to UK residents and will be eligible for funding for the full duration of their study programme once enrolled, if able to produce Home Office documentation that outlines their status, for example, refugee status, humanitarian protection, discretionary leave or ELE/ELR in the UK. Asylum seekers if able to produce an application registration card (ARC) which is issued on or close to the date of their asylum claim. The date of issue will be recorded on the ARC. EU, EEA or Swiss students are able to use the online service to prove their immigration status. Institutions can continue to accept EU citizens' passports and identity cards as evidence of their immigration status until 30 June 2021.

GCSE Maths and English re-sits exam fees are not charged for the standard June exam entry, but a request to sit an earlier November sitting or to top up a grade, already deemed as a pass (4-5) will be chargeable.

Where trip/s are included in a study programme and deemed as compulsory to learning aim, then no fees/charges can be made to the learner.

Non-compulsory trips can be charged for.

Tuition fees for non-funded provision which includes extra curricula activities, will however be charged in full at the full cost rate.

ESFA 19+ learners

In all instances funding eligibility will be referenced and governed by extant ESFA AEB funding and performance management rules (updated by ESFA as appropriate before the year or in the prevailing academic year).

Where a learner is 19 or more on 31 August in the academic year, they will be expected to pay the published fees, except in cases where they are eligible for fee remission or are continuing a programme they began aged 16 to 18 (19+ continuers). All learners eligible for funding are either fully funded or co-funded. Where the learner is co-funded, then either the learner or their employer will need to contribute towards the costs of learning to add to the state's contribution.

Learners aged 19 or over for second Level 3 up to Level 6 learning aim (non-apprentice)

(The age applies on the day they start the learning aim, not their age at the start of the funding year.)

ESFA funding is no longer available for learners aged 19+ studying a second Level 3 (excluding Apprenticeships and OfS (Office for Students) funded courses).

Level 3 free courses for jobs offer: We will fully fund individuals as part of this offer where they:

- are aged 19 or above on 31 August within the 2022 to 2023 funding year; and
- have not achieved a full level 3 qualification, or above, which meets the requirements set out in the [full level 3](#) section; and
- enrol on the level 3 FCFJ qualifications approved for funding

We will also fully fund individuals as part of the offer where they meet the [definition of being unemployed](#) or the [low wage criteria](#) and enrol on the level 3 FCFJ qualifications approved for funding, including learners who already have a level 3 qualification of higher.

For Further Education Certificates and Diplomas, Access to Higher Education and A Level programmes at level 3, 4, 5 and 6, payment may be made via an Advanced Learner Loan from Student Loans Company (SLC). For all non-apprenticeship learning (including classroom delivery) the fee charged will be the weighted ESFA rate using the funding matrix.

Exam fees will not be charged to learners taking out an Advanced Learner Loan.

All learners aged 19 and over must pay their tuition fees by one of the following options:

- a loan from the Student Loans Company (SLC)
- pay the fees themselves (in full or by instalments)
- employer paying
- a combination of the above.

Loans are for the cost of the course and are paid directly by the SLC to HSDC. They are not maintenance loans. Exams fees are not applicable to loans students.

Where the course is to be loan-funded, proof of loan approval must be provided to HSDC before the enrolment can be confirmed. If Student Loan payments are not activated from the SLC at the start of course, HSDC reserves the right to charge a 10% deposit, refundable when the loan is activated by the SLC. If the loan is not activated by the SLC, HSDC will charge the learner for the remaining sum (90%) owed.

Failure to pay the fee will result in possible suspension and non-access to HSDC's IT system.

6. Apprenticeships

Employers are responsible for paying fees for apprentice training; this is either through a direct contract with HSDC or through the Apprenticeship Levy. Fees are calculated in consultation with employers and are based on the funding bands published by the ESFA.

Employers will fall into one of 3 categories:

1. Levy payer: the amount of funding that an employer paying the levy can access is linked to the value of their levy contributions, the proportion of employees living in England, plus a government top-up. Employers access government funding for apprenticeships through their apprenticeship service account. Funds can be transferred to another employer. Any unused funds will expire 24 months after they appear in the account on a 'first-in, first-out basis'.
2. Co-investment (non-levy): employers who do not pay the levy, and those who want to invest more in apprenticeship training than they have available in their levy accounts,

make a financial contribution, called a 'co-investment'. The rate of co-investment is 5% of the total price of the apprentice's training, with the government covering the remaining 95% of the cost.

3. Small employer waiver: employers with fewer than 50 staff can train, at no cost, apprentices who are aged 16-18, or apprentices who are aged 19-24 who have previously been in care or who have an Education, Health and Care Plan. No co-investment is required to be paid.

7. Higher education (HE) fees

Fees for HE courses (Foundation degrees and HNC/D courses) will comply with OfS regulations and will be set in consultation with validating Universities and the HSDC Executive Team.

HSDC is aware of HE fee setting conditions for fee-regulated courses regarding Access Agreements which sustain or improve access, learner success and progression among people from under-represented and disadvantaged groups.

HSDC does not have an Access Agreement in force as it does not charge above the basic fee (the level of tuition fee **up to** which an access agreement is not required) for any of its HE fee-regulated courses.

HSDC annually reviews its need for an HE Access Agreement when setting fees for a new academic year.

Fees for HE courses which are delivered by HSDC under a franchise arrangement will be set in partnership with the relevant University.

In the event HSDC is unable to preserve continuation of study for HE learners, the following compensation provisions apply;

- Payment of additional travel costs for learners affected by a change in the location of their course.
- Payments honouring commitments to learner bursaries.
- Compensation for maintenance costs and lost time where it is not possible to preserve continuation of study.
- Compensation for tuition and maintenance costs where learners must transfer courses or provider.

Claims should be submitted to the Deputy Principal Finance & Facilities.

8. Advanced Learner Loans

Advanced Learner Loans are similar to HE loans, and learners need to meet all the following criteria:

- Aged 19 and over (on the first day of your course)
- Resident in UK*
- Studying an eligible course at Level 3, 4, 5 or 6.

*Please refer to <https://www.gov.uk/advanced-learner-loan/eligibility> for further information on nationality or residency status eligibility criteria.

9. Full cost/commercial courses

Where HSDC runs courses that are not funded by ESFA, OfS or other public bodies, these are deemed Full Cost.

International students will be charged fees on a Full Cost basis.

Where HSDC runs Full Cost courses it will seek to charge a fee to recover direct costs of delivery and preparation (to include labour, materials, exams IQA/EQA, travel, room hire and contribution to overheads).

Fees are set on an annual basis by the HSDC Executive.

Prior approval must be sought and given before confirming and running such courses and all **fees are payable in advance** unless approved otherwise.

10. International Students

In a situation where a prospective student does not meet the ESFA funding eligibility criteria but has the necessary visa requirements in place, they may be enrolled in accordance with the UKVI (UK Visa & Immigration) statutory regulations and at the discretion of HSDC. In this situation, the student will need to pay the appropriate fee. In addition, the student will be expected to meet all other costs of their study as required.

- Fees for International students are set by the Deputy Principal Finance & Facilities on an annual basis. The Deputy Principal Finance & Facilities has the discretion to vary the fee in special circumstances.
- For details of fees, please contact the International Manager.
- Fees must be paid in Sterling equivalent regardless of the exchange rate and may include a 2% credit and payment surcharge. Any additional international bank transfer fee will be payable by the student.
- Fees will include full payment and not netted off to reflect any agency fee.
- Fees must be received in advance of the student attending college.
- Additional fees may be charged for ad hoc transport support (e.g. airport transfers).

Tuition fees are non-refundable, unless by prior written agreement with one term's notice.

Homestay

- Fees are payable annually in advance.
- Fees cover holiday periods. HSDC cannot guarantee Homestay accommodation during the long holidays (Christmas and Easter). Some students may be moved over the holiday, however, HSDC will endeavour to support students with Homestay accommodation as appropriate.
- There is no refund due to students who decide to travel home over the holidays.
- Total payable includes £300 deposit (refundable) and £100 arrangement fee for new students.
- Where applicable, a 2% credit card payment surcharge will be added to the fee.
- HSDC uses a third-party partner, UK Guardians, for guardianship and Homestay accommodation. These fees are paid to UK Guardians in advance for the full year.

Homestay fees are non-refundable, unless by prior written agreement with one term's notice.

11. Exams, assessments & professional body registrations

Examination fees are charged in full to all learners at enrolment, except for ESFA fully funded learners and learners accessing student loans.

Subscription charges, made by professional bodies to become a member of that organisation, are payable by learners aged 19 or over.

Exam fees for all full cost courses will be charged in full to the learner.

Learners resitting examinations and assessments will be charged in full, except for Functional Skills. For those candidates who wish to retake an exam without being enrolled on the course at college, an additional administration fee will be charged. This charge will be reviewed annually.

Learners who wish to be certificated for partial achievement of a whole qualification will be charged an administration fee.

12. Other fees

HSDC will levy charges for materials and equipment which are not a requirement of a qualification or where the learner will retain the materials or equipment at the end of their course.

HSDC reserves the right to charge for the following:

- Fines for the late return of library books;
- Deposits on lockers;
- Replacement ID cards;
- Photocopying and printing, including computer printouts;
- Course materials;
- Disclosure and Barring Service checks (non-compulsory to learning aims);
- Trips and optional extra activities where the activity is taking place outside a required part of an agreed study programme. Examples of optional extra activities include theatre, cinema or museum visits or other day or residential visits.

SECTION C: FEE TERMS & CONDITIONS

13. Reduced fees

The Deputy Principal Curriculum and Deputy Principal Finance & Facilities have discretion to reduce or waive fees for home learners in exceptional circumstances.

Contracts with employers for multiple learners may be subject to negotiation.

14. Payment methods

Course fees can be paid at any campus by cash, cheque, credit/debit cards or online as/if available as a facility. Some fees (trips/general products) can also be paid via WisePay.

15. Instalments

For individual/private learners, payments by instalments where the fee is greater than £600, and the course is greater than 12 weeks in the academic year are possible.

For learners paying privately on a course of a full year the fee is either payable in full at start or on an instalment option of;

- Between £600 to £2,000 – 4 monthly consecutive instalments from date of enrolment
- Over £2,000 – termly instalments (September, January, April) with assessment/exam fee payable by 1 November

If the learner does not pay the instalments in full and in line with the repayment profile, they will not be able to complete the course and gain certification.

16. Payment by employers or sponsors

A learner may have made an agreement for course and other fees to be paid by their employer/sponsor. This is an agreement made between those two parties.

Where it has been confirmed as part of the advice and guidance and enrolment process that the fees for the learner are to be paid by an employer/sponsor, then formal and written confirmation of this must be submitted to HSDC, via an official purchase order or letter of authority, at which point the invoice is payable in full.

HSDC must receive any such purchase order or letter of authority for payment by a third party at the point of enrolment, otherwise the learner will be required to pay the full fees due.

HSDC reserves the right to withdraw the option of credit terms for employers/sponsors where there is evidence of persistent late or non-payment.

If the learner has left the employment of the company the employer is still responsible for the balance of fees owed to HSDC – the debt resides with the employer.

17. Refunds

Refunds or partial refunds will only be considered in the following circumstances:

- HSDC closes the course or changes the day, time, or venue of a previously advertised course.
- Serious illness or hospitalisation of the learner, evidenced by medical certificates. Any refund granted will be based on the remaining classes of the course after a claim has been received.
- Serious illness or hospitalisation of a partner, parent or child necessitating full time care by the learner, confirmed by a medical certificate. Any refund granted will be based on the remaining classes of the course after a claim has been received.
- Other exceptional circumstances at the discretion of HSDC. In the first instance, an application in writing should be made to the Finance Manager.
- No refunds are made if the learner leaves or is suspended or is excluded in accordance with HSDC's Disciplinary Code.

Where the above exceptional circumstances **do not apply** the following refund terms apply;

- Before a course starts - full refund less a £25 admin fee.
- If course has started and is a full academic year course charged at £100 or more, a 75% refund of course fees in first 6 weeks (less a £25 admin fee).
- If course has started and is a full academic year course charged at £100 or more, a 50% refund of course fees after 6 weeks and up to the course midpoint (less a £25 admin fee).
- No course fee refunds after the mid-point.

The above refund policy applies to all learners, including HE learners, regardless of how they are funded (self-funded, sponsorship and/or Student Loans Company).

18. Outstanding fees

Any fees that remain outstanding beyond their due date for settlement could prejudice learners' continuance on the course or entry for an examination.

All outstanding fees are to be paid up in full before a learner can progress onto the next year of their course or enrol on a new course at HSDC.

HSDC reserves the right to use debt collection agencies to collect overdue course fees but will always work with learner/employer/sponsor before reaching this stage.

19. Fee setting approach

Fee setting will normally be set by the end of March each year and consider:

- Competitor pricing for same/similar courses
- Curriculum growth and marketing strategies
- Costs of delivery, contributions, and financial viability
- Demand
- ESFA funded/co-funded rules
- Latest published ESFA & OfS guidelines and suggested assumptions

With the above in mind, HSDC reserves the right to use a mixed approach in deciding fees.

20. Disputes

HSDC accepts there may be instances where a dispute or disagreement arises between HSDC and learner/employer. HSDC will always investigate the facts and attempt to reach a fair and reasoned decision that supports the learner and employer relationship.

Disputes will be formally handled according to HSDC's Complaints Policy.