

Tuition Fees and Charges Policy

**Effective for programmes commencing
on or after 1 August 2024**

Overall responsibility:	Deputy Principal of Finance and Corporate Affairs
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Contents

1. INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE.....	3
2. RESPONSIBILITY.....	3
3. POLICY STATEMENT.....	3
4. TUITION FEES & CHARGES.....	4
5. OTHER FEES & CHARGES.....	7
6. PAYMENT OF FEES.....	9
7. REFUNDS.....	10
8. QUALITY STATEMENT.....	11
9. ASSOCIATED POLICIES.....	11

1. INTRODUCTION AND SCOPE

- 1.1 The Corporation is responsible for setting a broad policy on tuition and associated fees payable to the College, subject to any terms and conditions attached to grants, loans or other payments paid or made by Funding bodies.
- 1.2 The policy applies to new learner agreements commencing in the 2024-25 academic year (1 August 2024 to 31 July 2025).
- 1.3 Education and training for 16–18-year-olds and 19–24-year-olds with a current Education and Health Care Plan (EHCP) is fully funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA). This policy covers the arrangements for fee remission which support this funding position. 'Tuition fees' in practice generally therefore apply to learners aged 19 or over who are co-funded by the ESFA, are funded by other agencies, funded via an Advanced Learner Loan, or who self-fund their learning.

2. RESPONSIBILITY

Deputy Principal of Finance and Corporate Affairs

3. POLICY STATEMENT

- 3.1 Learning providers have discretion to determine tuition and other fee charges, within parameters set by the ESFA and other regulatory or funding bodies. Fee remission entitles the learner to receive their training fully funded by the ESFA and so tuition fees are not normally payable by qualifying students on qualifying courses.
- 3.2 The College will grant fee remission in line with the categories and criteria that the ESFA stipulate in their extant guidance. Students are liable for the full payment of fees until evidence of eligibility for fee remission or alternative funding arrangements are confirmed, which will usually be at the point of enrolment. Students attending vocational programmes who do not enter for the examination or assessment may be ineligible for funding by the ESFA and become liable for fees.
- 3.3 Fees for Apprenticeships and Higher Education are determined through different regimes, as set out in the relevant sections below.
- 3.4 Other charges may apply to individual courses or students. Such charges may include, for example, exam resit fees, resource fees, charges for trips, and fees to cover other costs where no government funding is available. Such charges are not normally refundable.
- 3.5 Fees and charges for all activity will be set at a level which, together with any public funding:
 - Supports the achievement of the College's Strategic Plan;
 - Recovers the full economic cost of delivery, including the costs of tuition delivery, materials, capital and other recurrent costs; and
 - Makes an appropriate surplus supporting the College's overheads and strategic objectives, reflecting market conditions.

Where the achievement of the College's objectives requires fees to be set at a level which, in the short term, is insufficient to cover the full economic cost of activity, the College must have sufficient funds to meet any expected short-term deficit.

- 3.6 All specific fees and charges must be approved by or fall within a framework agreed by the Deputy Principal Finance & Corporate Affairs, or the Director of Work Based Learning for Apprenticeship fees.
- 3.7 The College will publish accurate and up to date information about fees, including this policy. Clear information will be given to students and other stakeholders, such as parents (where a student is under 18) and employers, before the student has committed to a course. Changes in fees or charges because of a student transferring course will also be communicated to students before a transfer is confirmed. Students who join a class later than the advertised starting date will be expected to pay the full course fee.
- 3.8 Fee levels can change from year to year due to, for example, changes in funding arrangements. Regardless of any information disclosed on the College's website or by a member of staff, the fee to be charged is the latest approved by the Deputy Principal Finance & Corporate Affairs and incorporated within the College's student records system prior to the student's enrolment.
- 3.9 The College reserves the right to cancel any course or change its charging policy where its costs may result in financial loss. The College will refund fees and charges in full where a course or programme is cancelled by the College and no suitable and agreed alternative course is available. Such refunds will not be paid to learners who have voluntarily left the course or who have unauthorised absence for a period of four weeks or more prior to closure of the course.
- 3.10 The College relies on income from a full class group to meet its objectives and cover the cost of delivery. The College will not, therefore, refund fees to individuals who withdraw from course programmes due to changes in personal circumstances. The College will, however, honour requests for a refund made in writing within 14 days of enrolment, where a student or their sponsor changes their mind and they withdraw from their programme of study, with the exclusion of short courses of less than one month. The Principal & Deputy Principal Finance & Corporate Affairs have discretion to award refunds on compassionate grounds, or where there are extraordinary or unforeseen circumstances outside the control of the student.
- 3.11 The College reserves the right to suspend or exclude any student who fails to pay their fees or make satisfactory arrangement to do so. The College also reserves the right to not accept enrolment onto another course in the future if there are outstanding fees on a student's account.
- 3.12 The Principal has discretion to approve fee charging arrangements for categories of students or course programmes not directly referred to by this policy. The Principal also has discretion where a derogation from the arrangements set out in this policy is considered appropriate due to changes in guidance or regulations, for marketing, or other reasons such as exceptional financial hardship. In either case, the Principal must have due regard to this Policy Statement and shall inform the Corporation of material changes to this policy in a timely manner.

4. TUITION FEES & CHARGES

14-16s/Under 16s

- 4.1 The College does not enrol 14 – 16 cohorts but in exceptional circumstances may accept applications from individual students in this age group, subject to eligibility. If the learner has been home-schooled, the College may be able to claim full funding for part time courses only and no tuition fees would be payable. If the College agrees to accept other learners in this age category, fee remission will be applied in line with current funding guidance.

'School Link' Arrangements

4.2 Fees for students attending College programmes under "School Link" arrangements will be charged in line with the Policy Statement above. Specific fees will depend on the course programme attended and the delivery arrangements, including numbers of students and groups. Fees will generally reflect the weighted funding received by the College for a 16–18-year-old enrolled on the same programme of study. The College may make additional charges for elements such as trips and visits.

16-18 students

4.3 No tuition fees are payable by students aged under 19 (on 31st August 2024) who are not enrolled at any other educational institution (including schools), subject to the required evidence being presented and eligibility criteria for the both the course and student being met.

4.4 Students wishing to transfer to the College for all or some of their studies part way through the year must, however, arrange for their previous institution to pass on to the College the proportion of funding equivalent to the period for which the College will deliver. Failure to do so may mean that the College cannot accept such learners.

4.5 16-18 year old students sponsored by local schools or the local education authority will be charged fees pro-rated to the proportion of their programme delivered by the College. For example, if the College delivers 50% of a student's programme the sponsor will be charged 50% of the value of the full fee. The fee will be set at the funded value of the programme, including weighting factor.

Aged 19 years or over

4.6 Students aged 19-24 (on 31st August 2024) with an Education, Health and Care Plan who are not enrolled at any other educational institution, including schools, are eligible for full fee remission subject to the required evidence being presented and eligibility criteria for both the individual student and their course being met.

4.7 The criteria for which courses are deemed eligible for ESFA funding and eligibility requirements for adult students change from year to year. There will be no tuition fee for qualifications which are classed as fully-funded if the student meets the fee remission criteria determined by ESFA funding guidance for the year of study.

4.8 Where the student is classified under ESFA rules as "co-funded", 19+ learners will generally be charged a fee which equates to 50% of the weighted funding value for each subject taken, subject to the College's discretion. Fees will therefore vary for different qualifications. Fee remission for 'co-funded' qualifications is also subject to evidence requirements and eligibility criteria being met. Co-funded students may be charged the full value of exam and other fees.

4.9 19+ students transferring from a funded to an unfunded or co-funded qualification are liable to be charged a fee up to the full approved fee for their new course. Students transferring from an unfunded or co-funded qualification to a fully funded qualification may be eligible for a refund of tuition fees.

4.10 Students enrolled on funded distance learning qualifications delivered by the College and who fail to complete the qualification in a timely manner (currently 10 weeks) may be charged a late / non-completion fee of up to £100. The College will have the discretionary right to pass on to relevant learners the full cost of learning materials for study by 'distance' learning.

4.11 Tailored learning replaces both Community Learning and non-regulated provision. In 2024/25, the College will remit fees for learners in line with the eligibility criteria set by the ESFA for the Adult Skills Fund. Learners who do not meet the remission criteria will be charged fees based on the ESFA Base Rate for Adult Skills funding, subject to the College's discretion. Learners who are deemed to have equivalent status to 'co-funded' students will be charged fees at half of the relevant rate.

Advanced Learner Loans

4.12 Advanced Learner Loans from the Student Loans Company may be available for eligible 19+ learners enrolling on eligible higher-level qualifications (level 3 and above, excluding Higher Education provision). Advanced Learner Loans can contribute up to 100% of the weighted funding value of the qualification. The student would be liable for any difference between the loan and the College's fee rate and/or for the full outstanding fee amount if, for example following withdrawal or exclusion of a student, the Student Loans Company ceases to make payments to the College. Students whose funding applications are rejected or cancelled by the Student Loans Company after they have started their course remain liable to pay their tuition fees.

Full Cost Recovery

4.13 Courses that do not attract ESFA funding are designated 'Full Cost' courses. Fees for such courses will be set in line with the Policy Statement above. Such courses will be expected to, as a minimum, cover all direct costs and a contribution to overheads, and be set in line with market conditions.

4.14 Students who are not eligible for ESFA funding will be charged the full fee rate, regardless of age, irrespective of whether the course programme they are studying is eligible for funding.

International Students

4.15 The College does not have a Tier 4 licence and does not currently sponsor international students. Students whose immigration status allows them to study but who do not meet the required residency criteria and are not eligible for funding will be charged the full fee rate for their course programme.

Higher Education

4.16 All Higher Education programmes incur a fee for each academic year of study. Tuition Fees are determined by Northampton College in line with guidance and regulations set by the Office for Students (OfS). For 2024/25 the College will not charge in excess of the Basic Fee amount, £6,165 for a full-time programme, or the relevant proportion of this amount for part-time programmes.

4.17 The tuition fee covers tuition, registration, examination and assessment costs. Other charges may be made and charged separately for additional elements such as the cost of trips and consumables.

4.18 Students are liable for the full amount of the fee for their higher education course and are responsible for their application to the Student Loans Company where required. The student is ultimately responsible for ensuring that all tuition fees charged are paid in full.

4.19 Further information is contained in the College's specific Higher Education policies:

- HE Terms and Conditions 2024/25
- HE Refund and Compensation Policy 2024/25

- HE Student Protection Plan 2024/25

Apprenticeships

- 4.20 Fees for apprenticeship training are determined in line with government requirements and will normally not exceed the funding band maximum allocated and published for each apprenticeship by the Secretary of State for Education. The College may charge more than the funding band maximum. This excess is defined as 'top up fees' and is not eligible for government funding.
- 4.21 Actual fees will be determined on a case-by-case basis, negotiated with the employer during the on-boarding process for each apprenticeship and subject to the funding rules in place at the time of the apprenticeship start. The actual fee is based on the Total Negotiated Price (TNP) agreed with the employer. The TNP will reflect a 'Recognition of Prior Learning' adjustment in line with ESFA funding rules. The TNP for each apprenticeship must be approved by the Director of Work Based Learning, who must have regard to the Policy Statement above in determining negotiated fees.
- 4.22 Where a student enrolls on an ESFA accredited apprenticeship programme and where the student's employer is paying via the apprenticeship levy or by "co-investment" directly to the College, then the employer and not the student is liable for fees due as part of the apprenticeship programme. If funds reserved by an employer are not approved by the Apprenticeship Service, the employer will be liable for the full fee. If an Apprentice withdraws or is withdrawn, amounts paid or due in respect of actual attendance will not be refunded to the employer. Payments for training and / or assessment not delivered by the withdrawal date will be repaid to the employer.
- 4.23 Employers who pay the Apprenticeship Levy will normally pay the full TNP. Employers who do not pay the Apprenticeship Levy are liable for up to 5% of the TNP (co-investment) with the remainder funded by the Government. Apprenticeships with Non-Levy paying employers who employ an apprentice between the ages of 16-21 on their apprenticeship start date, are fully funded by the government. Apprenticeships with Non-Levy paying employers with fewer than 50 employees who employ an apprentice between the ages of 22-24 with either an EHCP on their apprenticeship start date or who have been in the care of the local authority, are also fully funded by the government. Relevant employers are not therefore liable for a fee for such apprenticeships.
- 4.24 Additional value-added services outside the TNP will be charged for. This may include the cost of second or additional End Point Assessment and Functional Skills resits if required.

5. OTHER FEES & CHARGES

- 5.1 In addition to tuition fees, students may be required to pay other charges. These may include charges for trips, accommodation, exam retakes, fines, booking fees, breakage / damage to college property, non-return of college property such as ICT equipment, and debt collection charges. In certain cases, material costs may also be charged. The main categories of non-tuition fees and charges for 2024/25 are set out below.
- 5.2 Course programmes may include field trips and / or residential programmes which are considered integral to the programme. Students may be expected to meet the costs of such trips or activities themselves. In cases of hardship, and for eligible students, these items will be a priority for the Bursary Fund, subject to adherence to ESFA funding rules for the use of the bursary. If students not eligible for Bursary support cannot meet these charges the College will provide an alternative activity. Trips or similar activities which are not deemed integral to the course programme are not eligible for Bursary support.

5.3 The College will not charge students in receipt of full government funded remission for Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks where these are required for their course programme. 16–18-year-old students will not be charged for DBS checks. Where chargeable, co-funded or full fee-paying 19+ students, will be charged the cost charged by the DBS for the relevant check, currently **£18** for a Basic check.

5.4 The College reserves the right to introduce new charges or amend those charges set out below. In doing so it will have regard to the Policy Statement above and any relevant regulations or funding guidance. All additional fees or charges must be approved by the Deputy Principal Finance & Corporate Affairs.

Examination fees and associated charges

5.5 Students whose tuition is fully funded by the ESFA will not be charged for initial examinations. The College may charge students for examination resits and associated costs as follows:

Category or circumstance	Fee Rate
Students failing to sit an examination	£10 per exam not taken, plus the cost of the examination/paper not taken
Re-sit examination fees where determined that the student should meet the cost of the re-sit	Cost of full re-sit fee plus administration fee of £10
Re-sit fees for Apprenticeship End Point Assessments	Where a re-sit for end-point assessment is required, the following charges apply: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First resit – Northampton College to pay 50%, Employer to pay 50% • Second and subsequent re-sits – Employer to pay 100% The College reserve the right to review and adjust the proportions above at any stage.
Late examination fees where determined that the student should meet the cost of late entry	Cost of late fee plus an administration fee of £10
External examination fee for Students not enrolled onto a College course (subject to availability)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students who have previously studied with the College within one year: £30 per examination series, plus Awarding Body fees • Students who have previously studied with the College over a year ago or have never studied at the College: £60 per examination series, plus Awarding Body Fees. • Additional costs may be charged if curriculum staff are required to mark/IV coursework. • Candidates will be expected to cover the costs of any special arrangements, for example, a reader or scribe.

Enquiry about Results (EAR) administration fee if requested by student	Awarding Body costs plus a £10 non-refundable administration fee per application/series. Awarding Body fees will be refunded to the student if the grade improves.
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6. PAYMENT OF FEES

6.1 Fees payable in respect of course tuition are due in full at enrolment, unless:

- In the case of Apprenticeship programmes, evidence that fees will be paid by the employer from their apprenticeship service account or through an alternative payment plan has been provided; or
- Evidence of an application for student loan or advanced learner loan is provided. Evidence of loan approval must be provided within 42 days of course start date or fees will become payable in full; or
- A direct debit or Instalment agreement has been completed, in accordance with the instalment arrangements below.

6.2 Tuition Fees may, at the discretion of the Deputy Principal Finance & Corporate Affairs, be paid in equal instalments by Direct Debit (the last of which instalments must be collected before the end date of the course on which the Student is enrolled):

- 10 instalments – for courses lasting a full academic year, or 12 months or longer
- 3 instalments – for all other courses

Students and employers will be advised of the dates and amounts to be collected. Where relevant, if no direct debit mandate form is completed, fees are payable in full.

6.3 Fees payable in respect of other fees and charges will become due at various points, with specific details being advised before any commitment is made. For example, trips may be payable in instalments prior to the trip taking place.

6.4 Failed or late payments may result in an administration charge to the student, suspension or exclusion from their course of study, and certification of completion not being released. Students who withdraw, even though they are no longer a student, will still be liable to pay the tuition fees for the course.

6.5 In the event of a failed instalment payment or cancelled direct debit, the option of payment by instalment will cease and all outstanding fees will become due immediately. On an exceptional basis, where extenuating circumstances have been demonstrated, the Deputy Principal Finance & Corporate Affairs may approve an individual payment plan with a student or sponsor. If the terms of an exceptional payment plan are not met, the payment plan ceases, and any outstanding balance of fees will be due for immediate payment. Students experiencing financial difficulties should contact the Finance team as soon as they are aware of the problem.

6.6 Students with outstanding academic fee debt may, until all outstanding monies have been paid:

- Not be permitted to re-register for new courses or to continue their course
- Not be entered for assessment or examinations pertaining to the course.

The College may charge interest or late payment fees on outstanding debts where permitted to by current regulations. The College will refer unpaid amounts to an external agency to pursue payment. Any additional costs incurred by the College in the collection of the debt will be the liability of the student and will be added to the debt.

7. REFUNDS

7.1 Fees are non-refundable and due in full upon enrolment, subject to arrangements for instalments set out above. The College may consider refunds in the following circumstances:

- Cancellation: in accordance with 3.9, where a course programme is cancelled due to insufficient enrolments or for any other reason, and no satisfactory equivalent alternative is agreed with the student, all tuition fees paid will be refunded. Early completion of the course programme will not result in the refund of fees. Such refunds will not be paid to learners who have voluntarily left the course or who have unauthorised absence for a period of four weeks or more prior to closure of the course.
- Fees will not be refunded where course closure is temporary or due to circumstances beyond the College's control, including but not restricted to fire, flood or other force majeure, adverse weather conditions, failure of public utilities or transport systems/networks, restrictions imposed by the government, terrorist attack or threat of, epidemic or pandemic disease, temporary staff absences or changes including those due to industrial action.
- Discretionary refunds: In accordance with 3.10, the College will not generally refund fees to individuals who withdraw from course programmes. The College will, however, honour requests for a refund made in writing within 14 days of enrolment, where a student or their sponsor changes their mind and they withdraw from their programme of study, with the exclusion of short courses of less than one month.
- The Principal & Deputy Principal Finance & Corporate Affairs have discretion to award refunds on compassionate grounds, or where there are extraordinary or unforeseen circumstances outside the control of the student. A Refund request will need to be completed and the amount of fees refunded will be at the discretion of the Principal and / or Deputy Principal Finance & Corporate Affairs.
- Trip refunds: where a student withdraws from a trip and the College has not incurred any costs for the student, any trip charges paid will be refunded. Where the College has incurred costs for a student who withdraws from a trip, a discretionary refund may be provided.
- Other fees & charges may be refundable, where the college has not incurred any liability following the student's original commitment to pay the fee or charge. If any such liability has arisen, the fee or charge to be refunded will be after deducting any costs incurred by the college.
- Where genuine overpayment has occurred.
- Customer complaint: The upholding of a complaint is not in itself sufficient to result in a refund of fees, but a refund may be appropriate in some circumstances. All complaints will be handled in accordance with the College's Complaints Policy.

7.2 The College will endeavour to make all refunds due within 14 days of authorisation of the refund. Refunds will be made to the person or organisation who paid for the course, which may be different

from the person who attended the course. Where possible, refunds will be processed using the original payment method. Refunds may be subject to an administration fee of a maximum of **£50**.

7.3 Information about refunds and compensation for Higher Education courses can be found in the College's HE Refund and Compensation Policy.

8. QUALITY STATEMENT

8.1 The College has an Equality & Diversity Strategy and seeks to ensure that arrangements for fees and charges are consistent with this strategy.

9. ASSOCIATED POLICIES

Financial Regulations

HE Terms and Conditions

HE Refund and Compensation Policy

HE Student Protection Plan