



# Fees Policy 2021-22

## Introduction

- 1.1 This policy details how Hopwood Hall College will apply fee charges for courses funded by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), GMCA (Greater Manchester Combined Authority), Office for Students (OfS), application of Advanced Study Loans with Student Loan Company (SLC) and Commercial ("Full cost") courses.

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework within which the College's fee setting including tuition, exam, administration fees and refund processes are devised and operated.

The Policy applies to all types of provision including:

- a) Study programmes
- b) Adult Education provision
- c) Apprenticeship provision and Traineeships
- d) HE provision
- e) Commercial programmes "Full cost recovery"
- f) International students
- g) Community Learning

- 1.2 At the heart of our fees policy is the need to be more commercially aware and driven, with a developed understanding of changing market contexts and associated organisational objectives. This policy is based on the funding rules and entitlements published by GMCA, ESFA and OfS.
- 1.3 This policy will not discriminate either directly or indirectly against any individual on grounds of gender, race, ethnicity or national origin, sexual orientation, marital status, religion or belief, age, trade union membership, disability, socio- economic status, offending background or any other personal characteristic. Any issues of victimisation relating to protected characteristics will be dealt with in line with the Equality Scheme. People being treated unfairly as a result of bringing forward a grievance will be protected under the Equality Act.
- 1.4 The College acknowledges that it is important to meet current employer demand for skills by planning curriculum in order to meet GMCA priorities and plan for the future skills needs of the regional economy whilst making the college sustainable. Significant preparatory work has been undertaken to ensure that the college is well positioned financially. To plan curriculum, the College use labour market intelligence extensively along with the research and data analysis conducted by GMCA. Through this, the college has been able to re-engineer its curriculum plan to offer more advanced level skills and meet both local and regional priorities, meet skills gaps and prepare learners of all ages for the world of work. Indeed, the college curriculum offer is now aligned to the skills priorities identified for Greater Manchester. This alignment is set to continue as the college has a mature approach to business planning, involving staff from across the organisation and a planning cycle that encourages innovative development of new products, mapping of progression pathways and aims to meet both the Greater Manchester skills priorities of the future and the ambition of GMCA.

- 1.5 The FE and HE landscape has changed considerably over recent years and in order for Hopwood Hall College to meet existing organisational objectives, it is necessary for us to review our fee structure to ensure:
- We can compete effectively with other colleges and training providers.
  - We can successfully increase our market share or penetrate new markets in identified areas.
  - We can use pricing to position our offer more effectively in the market place, using LMI to govern our decision-making.
  - We can use Government subsidy to lever in investment in training from employers and individuals.
  - Where we are market leaders or our offer is not price sensitive we can maximise our income through charging fees.
  - Where appropriate, we can price activity to attract a particular cohort of students and/or business sector.
- 1.6 This policy is managed by the Fees Policy Group in accordance with the group Terms of Reference.
- 1.7 This policy will be approved by the corporation on an annual basis.

## 2. Terms

- 2.1 This policy outlines the College's tuition and examination fees for the 2021/22 academic year.

The College reserves the right to amend details of courses at any time such as:

- a) Course content, dates, times, venues
  - b) Fees payable
  - c) Concessions available
  - d) Terms and conditions
  - e) To close or not to start any published course
- All fees are due at enrolment or an instalment plan including a direct debit mandate completed at the time of enrolment.
  - Tuition fees are for one academic year only.
  - The Fees Policy will be reviewed annually. Any changes recommended will be referred for approval to the College SLT and the Corporation.
  - The College Fees Policy, and any subsequent amendments to it, will require the approval of the Corporation.

## 3. Type of Provision

### 3.1 Education & Training (16-19 Study Programmes)

#### 3.1.1 16-18 Year olds

The age of the learner on 31 August in the funding year determines whether the learner is fully funded by the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) as part of 16-18 funding stream. If aged 16, 17 or 18 on this date in any given funding year, then 16-18 ESFA funded. If a student is continuing on a programme of study that commenced whilst aged as defined above, then full-funding will continue even if they turn 19.

According to ESFA guidance, 16-18-year-old students do not pay tuition fees (excluding HE and full cost courses), although in some vocational areas they are required to purchase kits and specialist materials. Students will pay for trips where they are a mandatory part of the course and can make applications to the Bursary / Discretionary Learner Support (DLS) to request financial support with this.

### 3.1.2 19+ Year olds

An adult (19+) learner is where learner is aged 19 on the 31 August within the funding year they start a learning aim. For all other purposes, the age of the learner is at the start of each learning aim or for apprenticeships at the start of the programme.

Adult students are expected to pay course fees including exam registration except where students qualify for fee remission. Tuition fees can be waived under fee remission according to current guidance where adult learners are fully funded.

The Adult Education Budget (AEB) funding allocation to Greater Manchester from Government to support the devolved functions has been calculated based on residents who are resident within the Combined Authority area. Greater Manchester's devolved AEB can therefore only be used to support eligible Greater Manchester residents.

GMCA/ESFA funding for tuition fees will only be provided in relation to specific age groups, previous achievement and economic circumstances at the date the course commences. Eligibility for ESFA full and co-funding is shown in figure 1.

GMCA/ESFA will fund 100% of the tuition fee for students who they fully fund.

GMCA/ESFA will fund 50% of the tuition fee for students they co-fund. Learners will be required to pay the balance of their tuition fee.

GMCA/ESFA will fully fund students aged 19 to 23 who have a legal entitlement to their first full level 2 or level 3, there is a defined list of available qualifications published by the ESFA. There may also be fee exemption under low wage flexibility or other local flexibility arrangements.

Unless explicitly stated within this fees policy the college's approach to setting fees is consistently applied across these fee groups.

There are three distinct groups of adult learners as categorised by GMCA/ESFA, they are:

- 19-23 year olds
- 24+ Unemployed
- 24+ Other

### 3.1.3 **Adult Provision**

ESFA funded AEB includes support for 4 legal entitlements to full funding for eligible adult learners.

These entitlements are set out in the [Apprenticeships, Skills and Children Learning Act 2009](#), and enable eligible learners to be fully funded for the following qualifications:

- English and maths, up to and including level 2, for individuals aged 19 and over, who have not previously attained a GCSE grade 4 (C), or higher, and/or
- first full qualification at level 2 for individuals aged 19 to 23, and/or
- first full qualification at level 3 for individuals aged 19 to 23
- essential digital skills qualifications, up to and including level 1, for individuals aged 19 and over, who have digital skills assessed at below level 1

If an individual meets the legal entitlement eligibility criteria, you must not charge them any course fees.

***funding entitlements are subject to change in accordance with GMCA and ESFA announcements and policy changes.***

#### **Local Flexibility:**

ESFA funded AEB also supports delivery of flexible tailored provision for adults, including qualifications and components of these **and/or** non-regulated learning, up to level 2 – we call this ‘local flexibility’.

Local flexibility provision either is fully or co-funded, depending on the learner’s age, prior attainment and circumstances. Please refer to the ‘[level of government contribution](#)’ table on pages [29](#) and [30](#) and paragraphs 120 to 173 for learner eligibility. Where appropriate for the learner, you can deliver local flexibility provision alongside a legal entitlement qualification.

**Adult students may qualify for fee remission if they meet the following criteria as determined by the GMCA and ESFA:**

#### **Unemployed:**

- Receive Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA), including those receiving National Insurance credits only receive Employment and Support Allowance (ESA)
- receive Universal Credit, and their take-home pay as recorded on their Universal Credit statement (disregarding Universal Credit payments and other benefits) is less than £345 a month (learner is sole adult in their benefit claim) or £552 a month (learner has a joint benefit claim with their partner)
- are released on temporary licence, studying outside a prison environment, and not funded by the Ministry of Justice
- Providers may also use their discretion to fully fund other learners if both of the following apply.
- The learner: receives other state benefits (not listed in paragraph 120) and their take-home pay (disregarding Universal Credit payments and other benefits) is less than

£345 a month (learner is sole adult in their benefit claim) or £552 a month (learner has a joint benefit claim with their partner), and wants to be employed, or progress into more sustainable employment, and their take-home pay (disregarding Universal Credit payments and other benefits) is less than £345 a month (learner is sole adult in their benefit claim) or £552 a month (learner has a joint benefit claim with their partner), and you are satisfied identified learning is directly relevant to their employment prospects and the local labour market needs.

### 3.1.4 At the College's discretion and where appropriate evidence is provided, the following categories of student do not pay tuition fees.

Individuals who are aged 19 to 23 on the day they start their learning aims up to level 3 and individuals aged 24 or older on the day they start their learning aims (including units) up to level 2 (Students in this category are required to complete a college discretion funding form).

- Are Unemployed
- Receiving Universal Credit
- Actively seeking employment and the students learning is directly relevant to both the individual's employment prospects and the needs of the local labour market.
- Individuals aged 24 or older on the day they start their first full level 2 or first full level 3 qualification (excluding apprenticeships), and who have:-
  - left the British armed forces in the past 10 years after completing four or more years of service, or
  - been medically discharged from the British armed forces due to an injury in active service, after completing basic training.
- Learners aged 25 or older at the start of the funding year (see note 1 below), who have an Education Health and Care (EHC) plan, and all of the following apply:-
  - The learner has not completed the learning programme set out in their EHC plan as meeting their needs, because of an unavoidable delay in the learner beginning the programme, before reaching their 25th birthday.
  - The learner is placed with a training organisation and they have an EHC plan which confirmed that the learner's needs could only be met by that training organisation. And
  - The learner will continue to make progress on the programme.

### 3.1.5 Asylum Seekers

- a) Asylum seekers are eligible to receive funding if:
- they have lived in the UK for six months or longer while their claim is being considered by the Home Office, and no decision on their claim has been made or
  - they are in the care of the local authority and are receiving local authority support under section 23C or section 23CA of the Children Act 1989 or section 21 of the National Assistance Act 1948
- b) An individual who has been refused asylum will be eligible if:
- they have appealed against a decision made by the UK government against granting refugee status and no decision has been made within six months of lodging the appeal, or

- they are granted support for themselves under section 4 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999, or
- they are in the care of a local authority and are receiving local authority support for themselves under section 23C or section 23CA of the Children Act 1989, or section 21 of the National Assistance Act 1948.

3.2 Students may be requested to pay for trips and visits. Students can make applications to the Bursary / Discretionary Learner Support (DLS) to ask for financial support with this.

3.3 Learners in receipt of low wage may have their fees waived under GMCA/ESFA funding rules 2021/22:

- 3.3.1 The course is eligible for co-funding rate as per AEB rules
- 3.3.2 Learner earns less than **£18,135.00 if GM resident / £17,374.50 non-GM / non-Devolved resident** annual gross salary.
- 3.3.3 Learner will be required to present a wage slip dated within 3 months of the learning start date, or a current employment contract which states gross monthly / annual wages.

### Adult Advanced Learning Loan

The government-funded Advanced Learner Loan is to help pay tuition fees. It's available to people over 19 years old, studying courses at Levels 3 to 6.

From 1 April 2021, the National Skills Fund level 3 adult offer will be available to support adults aged 24 and above without an existing full level 3 or equivalent qualification. This offer will also be available to adults aged 19 to 23 alongside the 19 to 23 legal entitlement offer. Full details of the offer can be found in the National Skills Fund guidance <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-skills-fund>

3.4 19+ learners commencing study on a level 3 programme are no longer funded by the government and are expected to pay the course fees or take out an Advanced Learning Loan. Learners are required to provide evidence from The Student Loan Company (SLC) to confirm the awarded loan or make payment using one of the payments methods during registration as outlined in payment's section before enrolling on the course.

3.5 Should a student choose to withdraw and the college have not varied the course arrangements, the student will become personally liable for any outstanding fees that not paid by the Student Loan Company.

### Access to HE Diploma

3.6 If you take out an Advanced Learner Loan to fund an Access to HE Diploma, then go on to complete a higher education course, you'll be eligible to have the balance of your Advanced Learner Loan written off. However, if you don't complete either course, you won't be eligible to have the balance written off, and will need to repay your loan in full.

Remember, the Access to HE Diploma will stay with you for life, and is a useful qualification for gaining a place in higher education. It's therefore really important that if you are offered an unconditional higher education place, you continue to work hard to gain your Access to HE Diploma.

If you complete your Access to HE Diploma and choose to go on to study at university, you will be eligible for a student loan to help towards the cost of your university studies.

### Co-Funded Learners

- 3.7 For 2021/2022 co-funded learners will be charged a tuition fee equal to 50% of the unweighted funding rate of the course as recorded on LARS (Learning Aim Reference Service), plus examination fees and any associated costs, e.g. kit fees). This will apply as per co-funding ESFA eligibility rules.
- 3.8 For all programmes the fee is for one year's study and further fees will be calculated and charged on an annual basis.
- 3.9 The student will become personally liable for any outstanding fees should their sponsor (e.g. employer or Student Loan Company) fail to pay.

#### **4 Apprenticeship provision**

- 4.1 SME, Non-Levy Employer - 49 or less employees:
- 16-18 Apprentices - No fee is charged.
  - 19-24 Apprentices that have been a care leaver or have an Education and Health Care Plan – No charge.
  - 19+ Apprentices - Employer pays 5% of the negotiated price, ESFA pays remaining 95% of funding.
- 4.2 Medium employer – 50+ employees with a wage bill less than £3 Million
- 16-18 Apprentices – Employer pays 5% of negotiated price, ESFA pays remaining 95% of funding.
  - 19+ Apprentices - Employer pays 5% of negotiated price, ESFA pays remaining 95% of funding.
- 4.3 Levy employer – (Wage bill of £3 million or more)
- 16-18 Apprentices - Employer funds 100% of negotiated price from the Apprenticeship Service.
  - 19+ Apprentices - Employer funds 100% of negotiated price from the Apprenticeship Service.
- 4.4 The assumed employer contribution for each Apprenticeship programme is indicated in the ESFA funding guidance. Full details of Employer fees can also be obtained by contacting Training at Hopwood:-

<https://www.hopwood.ac.uk/search-apprenticeships/contact-apprenticeships-hopwood>

#### **5 Higher Education Fees**

- 5.1 Higher Education courses which are categorised as indirectly funded will have a fee set in agreement with the validating HEI which will also take responsibility for collecting the fee from either the SLC for students financing their course through a tuition loan or from the student if they are self-funding.
- 5.2 Higher Education courses which are categorised as directly funded will have a fee set by the college who will also take responsibility for collecting the fee from either the SLC for students financing their course through a tuition loan or from the student if they are self-funding.
- 5.3 The annual fees for HE courses for 2021/22 are as follows:

The College intends to maintain a competitive pricing structure amongst FE providers of Higher Education.

**FIGURE 2: Annual HE Tuition Fees**

Qualification Type	Duration	Annual Fee (£)
HND Full-Time	2 years	£6,000
HNC Full-Time	1 year	£6,000
HNC Part-Time	2 years	£3,000
Foundation Degree Full-Time	2 years	£6,000
Foundation Degree Part-Time	3 years	£4,000

- 5.4 University partners may require us to make changes to these fees, in which case the College reserves the right to make the changes if necessary.
- 5.5 Students should be able to access Tuition Fee loans via the Student Loans Company (SLC). The SLC letter must be provided at enrolment or by no later than the 43 day of enrolling on a course. If the SLC letter is not available the student must provide this as soon as possible. It is the responsibility of the student to complete their Student Finance application. However, help will be provided if necessary by the Student College Services team.

For information on applying for student loan to finance tuition fees, please visit:

<https://www.gov.uk/student-finance/overview>

- 5.6 Any student who has not paid their tuition fee in full at the end of the academic year may:
- not have assessed work marked
  - not be permitted to progress to the next year of study or to progress at the College until the outstanding amount has been settled
  - not be allowed to attend the graduation ceremony

## 6 Full Cost Courses

- 6.1 Full-cost commercial provision is where tuition fees are charged to the learner and/or employer so that all costs associated with the course are covered without claiming any public funding.
- 6.2 A number of courses have been moved to the category of full cost recovery as a consequence of restrictions on the amount of subsidised funding available and the need to utilise such funding in priority areas.
- 6.3 Full-cost course fees are charged depending on the number of guided learning hours and duration of the course at competitive rates compared to other providers. The final prices for these courses are approved by the Fees Policy Group.
- 6.4 Teacher Education:

Level 3 £450      Level 4 £900

## 7 Overseas Students

The College does not hold a Tier 4 licence which enables the recruitment of overseas students under the Point Based System-UKVI. Therefore do not have any overseas Tier 4 students.

## 8 Community Learning

- 8.1 Community Learning courses fees are charged depending on the type of course, duration of course, learning hours and at rates reflective of other Providers. Hopwood Hall College staff may receive concessions subject to HR approval.
- 8.2 A range of digital online short courses are available to GM residents to register online and complete via VLE and other online workbooks. These courses are free of charge provided that the overall cohort enrolled covers the 50% college contribution rate for financial efficiency.

## 9 Exam Entry Fees & Resits

- 9.1 The College reserves the right to charge examination fees in cases where students fail to sit their exam without good reason.
- 9.2 Students may be charged for the cost of examination resits. These are to be paid in full at the time the entry is processed. In the event of students seeking to enter resits after the published deadlines, a late fee will be charged. These fees may be waived at the College's discretion.

## 10 Payments

### Making payment

- 10.1 Learners can make payments by cash, debit/credit card apple pay, and instalments by direct debit. The College does not accept payment by cheque.

### Instalments:

- 10.2 The cost of the fee is divided equally over a maximum of 6 instalments plus deposit at enrolment.
- 10.3 All students are required to pay a deposit of no less than 10% of the course fee at the time of enrolment to secure a place on their course.
- 10.4 Instalments are only available for fees of over £100.
- 10.5 Learners may opt for deductions to be made on either the 7th or 22nd of each month.
- 10.6 Further administration charges of £25 will apply for each instalment that is defaulted or direct debt cancelled without prior notification to the College.
- 10.7 Students are liable for payments of any outstanding fees even if they withdraw from the course after 43 calendar days from the date of enrolment By signing the Learning Agreement, the student is agreeing to the payment terms within the Fees Policy.
- 10.8 Students who have any outstanding debts from the current or previous years will not be able to enrol on any course in 2021/2022 without approval of the Head of Finance or SLT.

- 10.9 Persistent defaulters will have to settle all outstanding balances before enrolment can take place.

### **Debtors**

- 10.10 The College will not allow students with outstanding fees to continue on programmes unless an agreed repayment schedule has been agreed. Attendance at classes will not be allowed in such circumstances. In such circumstances the Head of Finance will inform curriculum managers when students can no longer be allowed to attend classes. This will only be required after college disciplinary processes have been followed.
- 10.11 Any student who has not set up a payment plan or applied for a study loan after the first 6 weeks of their course may be withdrawn from their course of study.
- 10.12 Exam certificates may not be applied for, references will not be issued and the college will take legal action including the referral to a third party debt collection agency for the recovery of any remaining fees outstanding.

## **11 Refunds**

- 11.1 Refunds will only be given if the learner can justify that college has varied the course arrangements in some way, for instance by changing the day, time, venue or syllabus, or if classes have to be cancelled due to lack of student numbers.
- 11.2 Where a student chooses to withdraw before the start of any course, and the College is informed in writing of the withdrawal before the course starts, a £20 withdrawal fee will be retained by the College – any balance to be returned to the student.
- 11.3 There will be no entitlement to any refund for any withdrawal after commencement of the course and no refund after exclusion.
- 11.4 The College is unable to make refunds for absence due to changes in work commitments, personal or financial circumstances or any other reasons for not being able to attend the course. In these circumstances, any outstanding fees will remain payable.
- 11.5 The above rules apply to both students paying their own tuition fees and those students whose tuition fees are paid by a sponsor such as an employer.
- 11.6 If applicable, refund payments will be made in the most appropriate manner. For example, a cheque payment or BACS payment. Students should be aware that no cash refunds will be given.
- 11.7 For students in receipt of a tuition fee loan from the Student Loan Company then no refund will be given to the students as the Student Loan Company will adjust the funding paid to the college.

### **HE Student Refunds only**

- 11.8 In the event that the college can no longer offer continuation of study then HE students may receive a refund of their tuition fees and a compensatory payment to offset the

additional costs incurred to complete the course of study at an alternative location. Consideration will be given to other costs incurred such as maintenance costs and lost time where it is not possible to offer continuation of the course. Students to provide evidence of additional costs prior to any such consideration being made to the student. In these circumstances, the college may also honour student bursaries awarded at the time of enrolment.

For more information on HE and relevant policies please go to;  
<https://www.hopwood.ac.uk/discover-adult-he/higher-education-courses>

Please see section 14 for Complaints and Compliments policy

## **Apprenticeship Employer Fees only**

### **Cancellations and refunds**

11.9 In the event of a course being cancelled prior to commencement by the College a full refund of the co investment will be given.

11.10 If a learner withdraws during their apprenticeship training then the fee will be pro-rata to the length of time on programme. The employer would be liable for any fees still due. If the Employer has paid more than the pro-rata fee, they will be eligible for a refund of the difference less a £35 administration fee.

11.11 All refunds will be made at the discretion of the College.

11.12 Refunds will not be paid to an individual if their employer has paid the course fees.

**11.13 The College recognises the disruption that has been caused by Coronavirus and is working to ensure all reasonable efforts are being made to enable students to continue their studies to the best of their abilities.**

Students ordinarily should not expect any fee refund if they are receiving adequate online learning and support.

Refunds due to the Covid-19 pandemic can only be given in the following circumstances:

- a) Course Cancellation (prior to start date): If the College cancels the course prior to commencement, the College will offer students a place on a future course, with an alternative start date, in which case the fees will be deferred and no refund will be made. If an alternative date is not acceptable the course fee will be refunded and no administration fee will be charged.
- b) Course Cancellation (after commencement): if the College cancels a course which has commenced, there will be an assessment based upon the number of units/modules delivered and the ability to transfer or defer completion.
- c) Withdrawal from a course is supported by a valid medical certificate.

All refund requests may be reviewed on an individual basis

### **Apprenticeship transfers**

11.14 In the event of the College agreeing to a student transferring between apprenticeship programmes, there will be no financial penalty but if the apprenticeship transferred onto has a higher training and/or assessment cost the employer must pay the difference.

## Outstanding Debts

11.15 Any employer who has outstanding debts for apprenticeship fees will be asked to settle their debt prior to enrolling further apprentices.

11.16 Debts related to accommodation may result in the apprentice being asked to leave college and withdrawing from the course.

## 12 Waiving Fees

12.1 Members of the Senior Leadership Team have the authority to part waive fees up to £6,000 in exceptional circumstances. Learners must present a request in writing to the Head of Finance for consideration for fee waiver.

## 13 Financial Assistance

13.1 Students can enquire at Student & College Services regarding all forms of funding that they are entitled to receive to support their studies.

13.2 Students receive a £10 printing credit. Any additional printing needs to be paid for by students. Students receiving a bursary/Discretionary Learner Support (DLS) may use the cashless system to pay for additional printing.

## 14 Complaints and Compliments

We have a complaints and compliments policy. Students are made aware of this through the following mechanism:

- The college induction process signposting students to the policy on our website.
- The Student and College Services Manager oversees the compliments and complaints process;

[https://www.hopwood.ac.uk/application/files/3315/5376/3021/Compliments\\_and\\_Complaints\\_Policy\\_2019.pdf](https://www.hopwood.ac.uk/application/files/3315/5376/3021/Compliments_and_Complaints_Policy_2019.pdf)

## 15 Document Review Information:

- Version Number: **2.2**
- Policy Owner: **Executive Director / Chair Fees Policy Group**
- Policy Date: **17<sup>th</sup> May 2021**
- Revised Date:
- Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) completed: **Executive Director**
- EIA completed By: **Head of Student Support and Equality**
- Policy Review Date: **31<sup>st</sup> March 2022**

## 16 Who will need to know about this policy?

- All employees
- All students
- All customers
- Office for Students
- ESFA
- GMCA

## 17 Related Policies

- Single Equality Scheme
- Safeguarding & Child Protection

This policy is produced in accordance with the Data Protection Act (2018) and General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) 2018.

Please see college **Privacy Notice** at:

<https://www.hopwood.ac.uk/about/reports-and-policies>



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