

Sussex Coast College Hastings

Tuition Fee Policy 2017-18

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SUSSEX COAST COLLEGE HASTINGS (SCCH)

1 Introduction

- 1.1. Sussex Coast College Hastings' approach to setting and collecting tuition fees and associated charges (such as materials, equipment and educational visits) is reviewed on an annual basis. The tuition fees policy has a major impact on the educational character of the College and is therefore approved by the Governing Body.
- 1.2. The approach of the College to recovering fees is largely dictated by its principal funding bodies.
- 1.3. Sussex Coast College Hastings is not a business; it is classified as an exempt charity under the 2001 Further and Higher Education Act. However, the College is required to recover fees for many of the programmes that it runs.
- 1.4. Actual fees for 2017-18 are set out in Appendix 1.

2 Objectives

- 2.1. This policy seeks to ensure that:
 - The College has a fees policy that is fair, equitable and clear;
 - Tuition fees and associated charges are calculated and applied consistently across the entire curriculum offer of the College;
 - Any barriers to participation presented by tuition fees and associated charges are mitigated by providing flexible payment options and/or assisting learners to access appropriate financial support to meet the cost of these;
 - The College can respond flexibly to market forces and government policy, including fee guidance issued by funding bodies; the Skills Funding Agency (SFA), the Education Funding Agency (EFA) and the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE);
 - The College generates a proportion of overall income from non-publicly funded sources;
 - The College develops appropriate and effective targets relating to fee income generation, and reviews performance against these regularly, and in relation to sector benchmarks.

3 General Principles

3.1. The College has a Single Equality Scheme and seeks to ensure that arrangements for fees and charges are consistent with this.

3.2. Learners or their sponsors, unless they qualify for exemptions/waivers, are to be charged:

- a tuition fee;
- a materials charge (specific to individual courses);
- external fees (awarding body, examination, registration).

3.3. Classroom based learners are ultimately responsible for ensuring that their fees are paid, even where a third party (e.g. an employer) intends to pay on their behalf.

3.4. Where learning is predominantly delivered in the workplace (including all Apprenticeships) employers are ultimately responsible for ensuring fees are paid in accordance with the Adult Education Funding requirements. A learner cannot pay their own fees unless they are self-employed and are, therefore, both learner and employer.

3.5. All fees are due at enrolment and continuing attendance on a course or programme of study is dependent on the payment of all fees due. Appendix 1 sets out the fees payable for subsidised courses. Instalment arrangements are available provided that certain criteria are met.

3.6. No tuition fees are payable by 16–18 year old FE learners, including those on part time programmes, or by adult learners who meet the specified criteria in Appendix 1.

3.7. Learners seeking a reduction or waiver of fees under these policies must produce documentary evidence, when enrolling, of their entitlement to receive benefit, or proof of their membership of the relevant group.

3.8. In order for a learner to be eligible for Government funding for their learning programme the learner must have the legal right to be resident in the UK at the start of their programme. There should also be a reasonable likelihood that the learner will be able to complete their programme of study.

3.9. A learners status at enrolment (e.g. employed, in receipt of eligible benefit) applies throughout the year on that learning aim.

3.10. Where a learner has previously taken an examination with Sussex Coast College Hastings, resit examination fees will apply (excluding 16-18 Skills for Life learners). These examination fees are set by the individual awarding bodies and are payable in advance of the re-sit.

3.11. Other charges imposed by awarding organizations (re-marking, requests for scripts) will be passed on to all learners.

4 Further Education Course Fees: 16 – 18 Learners

4.1. Although the College is prohibited from charging 16-18 year old learners tuition fees in respect of EFA funded further education courses, the following costs will be passed on to these learners:

- The cost of any equipment necessary to undertake their programme of study if this equipment will remain the property of the learner once the course has been completed;
- Where required as a pre-requisite of the course. This would include, for example, the cost of a Criminal Records Bureau or Independent Safeguarding Authority check;
- A contribution towards the cost of any materials on practical courses such as art and design programmes. In the case of 16-18 learners such a contribution will be voluntary, but a learner who does not make the specified contribution will not be allowed to retain any practical work they have completed;
- The cost of any trips or visits associated with the programme of study;
- The cost of any examination re-sits, where appropriate.

5 Further Education Course Fees: Other Learners

5.1. Tuition fees are payable annually. For example a fee will be payable for each year of a two year course.

5.2 Where the College splits a 2 year course into two 1 year courses ;

- where year 2 is funded from a student loan, the loan becomes payable.
- other students will continue to benefit from any entitlements applied in the first year for reduced fees. This benefit does not continue beyond year 2.

5.3. Continuing learners who are over 18 and began a learning aim before the age of 19 will normally have their fees waived. Any start of a new learning aim, that is not part of a programme, is subject to fees.

5.4. The College reserves the right to charge an agreed hourly rate on specific tailored programmes for those students under 16.

5.5. The Assumed Fee Element (AFE) is 50%.

5.6. The College has a discretionary fund for fee remission. Students applications are considered on an individual basis by the College's Learner Services support team.

5.7. The requirement to pay the cost of awarding body registration and examination fees is set out in Appendix 1.

6 Apprenticeship Fees:

6.1 From May 2017 the funding model for Apprenticeships changed with funding split into two processes:

- Levy Paying Employers (those with pay bill over £3M)
- Non-Levy Employers (SME's generally)

6.2 The college will generally negotiate with employers and agree the fees in line with the appropriate Funding Band for each apprenticeship Framework/Standard, although, in exceptional cases, we will vary this for market forces.

6.3 For Levy Paying Employers the funding for Apprenticeships is expected to be fully funded from the 'Levy pot' accessed via the Apprenticeship Service up to the maximum value allocated to each levy employer. Were the employers Levy pot to be already fully allocated then they must co-invest 10% of the outstanding balance for that month. The government will then contribute the remaining 90% up to the funding band maximum, as negotiated between the college and employer.

6.4 Non-Levy Employers must pay 10% of the agreed fee negotiated between the college and employer up to the maximum of the funding band for each Framework/Standard. The government will then contribute the remaining 90% up to the funding band maximum.

6.5 If the Apprenticeship fee is negotiated in excess of the Funding band the employer is liable for the difference between this and the maximum funding band. This applies to both:

- Levy Paying Employers (those with pay bill over £3M)
- Non-Levy Employers (SME's generally)

7 Bespoke Employer Courses

7.1. Payment for such courses is due upon receipt of invoice.

7.2. Cancellations giving notice of more than 14 working days will incur a 10% administration fee. Notice of less than 14 working days will incur full fees.

8 Higher Education Course Fees

8.1. Where the College offers degree level courses accredited by a university, for example the University of Brighton or UCLAN, the university fee policy will apply;

8.2. Where the College offers degree level courses not accredited by a university (for example an HNC/D accredited by Pearson) then fees in line with the market will be applied at the college's discretion. This will apply regardless of the mode of study including campus based or online delivery.

8.3. The College offers higher education learners the facility to pay by instalments, although many learners elect to apply for a student loan to cover their fees.

9 International Fees

9.1. All international students (from outside of the EU/EEA) will be expected to pay their fee in full before the commencement of the course.

9.2. The College operates a host family service for accommodation and these fees are agreed with the International Department on a case by case basis at cost plus 5%.

9.3. Where students fail to obtain a visa, please see paragraph 11.2 below.

10. Advanced Learner 19+ Loans

10.1 Advanced Learner 19+ Loans will be available for learners:

- aged 19 and over and UK resident;
- studying at a Skills Funding Agency approved provider in England;
- studying at Level 3 to 6:
 - up to 4 A-levels (including A2- and AS-levels)
 - QAA Access to HE Diploma courses
 - QCF Level 3 and 4 certificates and diplomas
- Note that learners aged 19-23 may be able to access fully funded provision i.e. not required to take out a loan under certain circumstances including that the course is their first full level 3 qualification.

10.2 Full details of the access to these loans and also the accompanying bursary are available on request and also within the College Bursary policy, further information is available from Student Services.

11 Payments of Fees and Instalments

11.1. All fees become payable on the completion of an enrolment form either by the learner or sponsor unless the learner is entitled to full fee remission. Payment of fees may be made by cash, credit or debit card, direct debit or cheque. In the case of instalments, credit or debit cards or direct debits are preferred.

11.2. Administration fees are applied to fees as follows:

- All home students' fees will be deemed to include a non-refundable administration fee of £50 unless due to College cancellation;
- All overseas students' fees will be deemed to include a non-refundable administration fee of £2,100. This will be deducted from any refund where a student is unsuccessful in obtaining a visa;
- Fees for learners who transfer from one course to another will not be subject to an additional administration fee.

11.3. Where the total fee is less than £200 learners must pay in full at the time of enrolment, except where fees are purely for visits when alternative payment plans can be considered, based on college costs incurred and on dates of departure.

11.4. Where the total fee is £200 or more, and the course is more than 12 weeks in duration, learners can pay a 25% deposit followed by a maximum of three equal monthly instalments, preferably payable by debit/credit card or direct debit. Instalments may span academic years, depending on the start date of the course.

12 Unpaid Fees

12.1. The College will use appropriate debt recovery procedures where learners breach the terms of their instalment agreement, and may exclude such learners from the College.

12.2. Learners undertaking a two year programme will not be allowed to progress to the second year of the course where fees relating to the first year remain unpaid, and learners who complete a programme of study but have fees outstanding will not be allowed to enrol on further programmes of study until the outstanding debt has been cleared.

12.3 Students remain liable for the full fees in the event of withdrawal of a course funded by the Student Loans Company.

13 Fee Refunds (General)

13.1. Fee refunds or waivers will be approved where the College has cancelled a course (or very significantly altered start dates and/or location), where there is a justified complaint, or in exceptional personal circumstances, at the discretion of at least two Vice Principals.

13.2. If a learner wishes to withdraw from a course prior to its commencement, and informs the College in writing or by email at least 14 working days before the start date, a refund will normally be given, less an administration fee of £50.

13.3. If a learner wishes to withdraw from a course prior to its commencement, and fails to inform the College in writing or by email at least 14 working days before the start date, a refund will not be given subject to exceptional circumstances.

14 Fee Refunds (FE)

14.1. The number of attendances a learner actually attends has no bearing on the refund policy above.

14.2. The full fee for a course is payable even if the learner decides not to complete the course.

15 Fee Refunds (HE)

15.1. Where a learner elects to pay fees via a HE student loan, the Student Loans Company (SLC) will make payments to college per term, or part term attended, as follows: term one (25%), term two (25%) and term three (50%). Any remaining fees not covered by the loan therefore will be charged to the student accordingly.

15.2. Where a learner is paying their own fees, or fees are paid by a sponsor, in the event of a withdrawal refunds are payable in line with the HE institution policy and this is typically on a pro-rata basis of attendance.

16 Fee Refunds (E-learning)

16.1 A cooling off period is allowed for our e-learning students, which is 14 days from enrolment.

16.2 Where other rules apply, please refer to specific fee policy relating to the individual course.

16.3 Where a learner elects to pay fees via an advanced learning loan, the Student Loans Company (SLC) will make payments to the college each month. Students are liable for these payments, which represent the loanable amount.

16.4 Where these payments from the SLC cease due to a cessation of activity, then no further amounts are recovered from students directly.

17 Deferrals

17.1. Where a learner is obliged to withdraw from a course it may be possible to defer fees (if the Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality considers this academically appropriate) for up to 12 months. No further deferral will be granted and the fees will be forfeit after the specified period.

18 Interpretation of the Policy

18.1. The College recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances in which a certain level of discretion may need to be exercised.

18.2. A minimum of two Vice Principals are required to apply the discretion to waive or reduce deposits payable under instalment arrangements having regard to the personal circumstances of individual learners. However, waivers and reductions will not be given to learners with previous poor payment history.

18.3. This policy sets out the minimum tuition fee to be charged for different aspects of the College curriculum offer. Where appropriate, a higher tuition fee can be charged at the discretion of the College.

19 Monitoring of this policy

19.1. The policy has been through the College's impact assessment process. Further information on the impact assessment process is available on request.