



## HIGHER EDUCATION FEES & REFUND POLICY

**Version:** 2018/19

**Aim / Scope:** This policy is designed to inform college staff, applicants and stakeholders of fees and charges for Higher Education provision. In addition, it also sets out what facilities are in place for the collection of these charges and what support arrangements are in place for HE students.

**Policy Owner:** Director of Financial Resources

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## HIGHER EDUCATION FEES AND REFUND POLICY

### 1. Policy statement

College Higher Education fees are set to ensure that the college is able to cover the costs of every higher education programme and make a contribution to the colleges overhead costs.

### 2. Context and reasons for the policy

The college Higher Education fees policy is set annually based on the guidance from the Office for Students.

### 3. Policy objectives

The college staff, students, prospective students and students' employers and sponsors will understand:

- What the Higher Education tuition fee is;
- How fees are determined and what they are for
- When and how college fees are payable
- The fees for early withdrawals, suspensions and repeat years
- Refunds, bursary and payment difficulties

### 4. Setting the fee rate

#### 4.1 UNDERGRADUATE

**Home and EU** tuition fees are regulated by the new Office for Students and there are three categories of registration which are linked to access to public funding. For students commencing their course of study in September 2018 then the fees are:

- Full-time course £6,999 per annum
- Part-time courses £3,500 per annum
- HNC £3200 per annum
- HND £3625 per annum

Students who will repeat a full academic year will be charged the relevant rate for the year that they are repeating in.

Students repeating part of an academic year will be charged a pro rata rate based on the number of modules for the academic year in which they are repeating.

**International Students** tuition fees for International students are unregulated and are determined by market intelligence and recruitment levels. The current fees are set at £9,750 for Engineering courses and £9,250 for all other programmes of study.

#### 4.2 POSTGRADUATE

Tuition fees for Postgraduate courses are not capped and are determined by market intelligence and recruitment levels, the fee for postgraduate courses commencing in September 2018 is currently set at £3500 per academic year.

#### 4.3 TUITION FEE INCREASES

Tuition fees for students will remain at the level set at the commencement of their course for the remainder of their study on that programme.

Any increase in fees to students which either comes about because of any changes in college or the Office for Students will only apply to new entrants or existing students starting another programme of study.

### 5. **Determining tuition fee status**

All students of Higher Education programmes are required to pay the tuition fee appropriate to their programme of study and according to their status as an UK, EU or International student. Publicly funded Higher Education Institutions are permitted to charge “International” rates to students who do not fulfil certain residence and immigration status requirements. The college has established procedures in place to determine fee status where this is not clear for the initial application.

The UK government confirmed in a Ministerial statement on 21 April 2017, that EU nationals who commence studies in 2018 will have their tuition fee status protected for the duration of their course, regardless of the UK’s forthcoming exit from the EU.

### 6. **Students with previous Equivalent Level Qualifications (ELQs)**

Students studying for a second qualification at the same or a lower level are not eligible for public funding, with the exception of those who are eligible for the disabled students allowance, or those who are undertaking a Foundation Degree. The college will charge the standard home fee to such students but they will not have access to the student funding system so are advised to contact the HE Admissions Officer in order to clarify their financial position prior to accepting a place at the college.

## **7. What is included in the tuition fee?**

This is dependant of the programme of study and pathway undertaken and may include but not limited to the following:

- Lectures, seminars, tutorials and individual tuition
- Workshops, masterclasses and visiting speakers/professionals
- Library and computing facilities
- Access to practice rooms, studios and performance spaces
- Equipment loan
- Admissions and course administration
- Assessment, validation and graduation
- Support, advice and wellbeing services
- Careers, employability and Alumni services

Please see full course descriptions for further details relating to course specifics.

## **8. Payment arrangements**

Students cannot be fully enrolled without an acceptable payment method being agreed. All students will be given information regarding acceptable payment methods and instalment options as part of their admissions and enrolment instructions. These are reviewed from time to time depending on funding methodologies

### **8.1 HOME/EU STUDENTS**

Students who wish to pay via the Student Loan system must apply for the loan as soon as possible. If a student has not had their Student Loan application approved by the SLC by 1 December, an invoice will be sent to the student for payment.

Students whose tuition fees are being paid directly by a sponsor or third party must provide written evidence of this at or before enrolment.

Students not in receipt of a Student Loan, the college may allow tuition fees to be paid by instalments from a UK bank account. Students wishing to pay by instalments must pay a minimum of 25% on enrolment and then are able to pay the balance over a maximum of 6 direct debit payments. The final payment must be received before the expected end of the course.

### **8.2 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS**

International students will be required to pay the tuition fee in full before enrolment is completed, with the exception of those providing written evidence of payment by an official government or sponsor, in which case the payment arrangements will be agreed according to the on an individual basis.

International students requiring a CAS number apply for a Tier 4 visa will be required to pay 50% of the tuition fee before the issue of a CAS number and 50% at or before enrolment. Where the visa application is declined, approved too late, or the applicant does not meet the offer conditions, the amount paid will be refunded, after deduction of an administration fee of £50.

International students not requiring a visa will be required to pay in full at enrolment unless otherwise agreed. Any currency conversion or bank charges are the responsibility of the student and cannot be deducted for the fees payable.

## 9. Refunds for early withdrawal or suspension

### 9.1 HOME/EU UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS

Undergraduate students withdrawing or suspending from their course of study will be charged tuition fees based on liability periods as follows:

Agreed date of withdrawal/suspension as indicated on the withdrawal/suspension requests	Percentage of fee liability
Prior to the start of week 3 of teaching, as indicated on the published college calendar	Nil
Start of week 3 of teaching up to the end of the Christmas break, as indicated on the published college calendar	25%
From the start of week 12 to the end of the Easter break, as indicated on the published college calendar	50%
From the start of week 23 to the end of the academic year, as indicated on the published college calendar	100%

### 9.2 HOME/EU POSTGRADUATE STUDENTS

Date of withdrawal	Percentage of fee liability
After enrolment and within the first 2 weeks of teaching	Nil
During trimester 1	33%
During trimester 2	66%
During trimester 3	100%

### 9.3 INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

For International students studying either a Undergraduate or Postgraduate course the college will operate a no refund policy, with the following exceptions:

- If the student wishes to request a refund on the grounds of quality, they must follow the HE Complaints procedure to be considered for a refund.

- A refund may be considered, at the discretion of the Dean of HE, where there are compelling personal reasons for the withdrawal.
- If the student is being funded by an official external organisation on an instalment basis, which has curtailed the funding due to withdrawal, no further instalments will be payable.
- Where an international student has paid a deposit prior to applying for a Tier 4 visa, but the visa application is subsequently declined or delayed beyond when it would be possible to enrol, the applicant will be entitled to a refund of the deposit, minus an administration fee of **£50** and any bank/currency exchange charges.
- Where an International Postgraduate student has been withdrawn from the course due to academic failure, and not permitted to proceed to the next stage, the student will be able to request a refund of the fee relating to the trimester not undertaken. (Fees are pro-rated at one third of the full fee per semester).

#### 9.4 REFUNDS WHERE THERE IS AN OUTSTANDING DEBT – ALL STUDENTS

Where a student withdraws early and is entitled to a refund of tuition fees, the college may deduct the cost of any other outstanding debt from the refund, except in the case where a student's fees are paid through a tuition fee loan. Examples where this would apply (but not limited to) are: kit & equipment fees, outstanding library charges, course fees for any additional courses undertaken, charges for any optional visits/registrations not paid.

#### 9.5 DEFINITION OF WITHDRAWAL AND SUSPENSION DATES

The majority of college Home and EU students are funded by Student Loans and the college is required to confirm student attendance before each loan instalment is paid. Students are considered to be in attendance and therefore liable for tuition fees until they formally withdraw or suspend from their course of study. Failure to attend does not constitute a withdrawal from the course.

The Student Loans Company defines withdrawal as:

*'A withdrawal refers to the point at which scheduled learning, teaching and assessment activities and other on-going engagement ends, in agreement with the provider.'*

A suspension is by mutual agreement, between the student, the college and the validating bodies.

All students regardless of study level and funding considering withdrawal or suspension should consult with the HEDO team for advice regarding the financial consequences before making a decision. Students will need to agree a withdrawal or suspension and complete the relevant documentation prior

to each main holiday period (Christmas and Easter), if they wish to avoid tuition fee liability for the following terms.

## **10. Undergraduate transfers from another HE provider (Home/EU undergraduates with a tuition fee loan)**

For students who transfer into the College from another HE Provider their tuition fee liability to the College will depend upon the timing of the transfer. This will be in line with the tuition fee payments by the Student Loans Company. For example, if a student transfers after 2 weeks at another institution and has already paid 25% of the fee to that institution, the College will charge the remaining 75% of the fee.

## **11. Failure to pay**

Students are personally liable for payment of their fees and failure to pay the agreed tuition fees or to pay according to the agreed arrangements may result in any or all of the following actions, at the discretion of the Dean of HE:

- Students with outstanding tuition fee debts at the end of the academic year may not be presented to the Board of Examiners. This decision will be at the discretion of The Dean of HE after due consideration and recommendation by Programme Team.
- Returning students with outstanding tuition fee debts will not be permitted to re-enrol for the following academic year until debts have been paid. The college will take reasonable steps to recover debts which may include the use of a debt collection agency and/or other legal action. The college will however take reasonable steps to advise and support students in financial difficulty. Any student who is in financial difficulty should seek advice from HEDO as soon as possible.