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STUDENT FEES POLICY

Contents

Purpose	2
Background	2
Scope	2
Payment of Fees and Payment by Instalment.....	3
Non-payment of Fees by Students	4
Student and Apprenticeship Fees and Charges	4
Awarding Body Registrations and Examinations.....	6
Amendment to fees	6
Bursaries	6
Higher Education Fees	7
Advanced Learner Loans	7
14–16 Year-olds and students from schools	7
Apprenticeships	8
Cytech Courses	8
Fee Refunds.....	9
Annex 1 to 4. – Fee Instalment Plans for the Academic Year	11
Annex 1 - Fee Instalment Plans for the Academic Year	
Annex 3 - Useful Links	

Purpose

- 1.0 To provide a framework for setting fees, and to ensure appropriate guidance and information is available to current and prospective learners, employers, and other interested parties.
- 1.1 To ensure that the method of calculation of all fees charged to students and employers is fair and transparent.
- 1.2 To set out the principles for fee collection, fee refunds and appeals against refund decisions.
- 1.3 To ensure learners are made aware of opportunities to apply for relevant loans or bursaries to assist with fees.

Background

- 2.1 This policy sets out the requirements for the charging of fees and the rationale behind the fee structure as well as the arrangements for making refunds.
- 2.2 Fees in some cases are subject to government guidelines, via the FE funding bodies and the Office for Students (OFS), which provide the framework in which the fees are decided.
- 2.3 Some students will be entitled to be fully funded by the government: 16-18 learners and 19+ learners who meet the criteria for remission. Other students must pay fees.

Scope

- 3.1 The policy encompasses all fees and charges associated with courses offered by Activate Learning including those for:
 - ESFA funded students
 - Non-government funded students
 - Higher education students
 - 14-16 year-old students
 - Advanced Learner Loans (19+ year olds)
 - International Students
 - Apprenticeships
 - Cytech Courses
- 3.2 This policy will be reviewed annually.
- 3.3 Fees include:
 - Tuition fees
 - Registration and examination fees
 - Trip fees
 - Kit and Material fees
 - Travel contributions

Payment of Fees

4.1 Students can only be enrolled onto a course if they have completed one of the following:

- Paid their fees in full;
- Provided a signed sponsor letter for settlement of fees;
- Set up an installment plan and paid the 40% deposit;
- Had an Advanced Learner Loan approved or pending (4 weeks grace to have loan approved);
- Had a tuition fee loan approved or pending by the student loans company.
- Has a signed contract from employer confirming agreement to enroll on to an Apprenticeship programme

4.2 The preferred methods of payment are:

- Most major Debit or Credit Card (not American Express).
- Tuition fee loan via Student Loan Company (HE)
- Bank transfer
- Advanced Learner Loan (FE)
- Online payment (PayPal/Sage pay)
- Direct debit as part of an instalment plan
- Apprenticeship Service funds or co-funded Apprenticeship with the employer contribution paid using the above methods

4.3 In certain circumstances, other payment methods can be used including:

- Cash up to the value of £100.00.
- Cheques
- International students without a U.K. bank account may pay their full ESOL course fees in cash

4.2 Students may request to pay course fees by instalments, subject to the following conditions:

- Payments are made by Direct Debit and a mandate is completed at point of enrolment
- The student must have a U.K. bank account
- The course must be delivered over 10 weeks or more
- The course fee must be
 - over £200.00 for a short plan, or
 - over £400.00 for a long plan.
- A £10 direct debit administration fee is payable at enrolment
- 40% of the course fee is paid at enrolment
- The remaining 60% of the course fee is paid over
 - 6 equal instalments of 10% each for long plan, or
 - 2 equal instalments of 30% each for short plan
- Apprentices are not allowed to contribute funds towards their own programme, this must be paid for by the employer.

4.3 If a student withdraws from the course, they will remain liable for any outstanding fees subject to fee refund procedures. For Apprentices please see apprenticeship section.

- 4.4 The schedule of monthly instalments for the academic year is attached. Please refer to Annex 1 of this policy.
- 4.5 All students studying on a Higher National programme may request to pay course fees in instalments subject to the following conditions:
- 4.6 The student must have a U.K. bank account
- The course must be delivered over 10 weeks or more
 - The course fee must be over £150.00
 - Fees must be paid in three instalments in line with Student Finance England payments; one third on enrolment, one third in January and the final third in April
 - In line with Government guidelines, no administrative fee will be charged for students paying by installments
- 4.7 All payments should be collected by Advice and Admissions or Finance and recorded on the students account within REMS. Under no circumstances should other departments take payment. Failure to adhere to this may result in disciplinary action.
- 4.8 Higher level qualifications supported through the Apprenticeship programmes are to be funded through Apprenticeship eligible funding routes only.

Non-payment of Fees by Students

- 5.1 A student will not be enrolled if they have any unpaid amounts remaining from previous academic years or from a previous course.
- 5.2 In the event of non-payment Activate Learning reserves the right to exclude the student from their course and examinations. The student will be referred to the Credit Controller who will initiate debt recovery actions. In the event of non-payment, the student is likely to be withdrawn from the programme. If appropriate, debtors are at risk of being referred to external parties who may seek payment of fees and recovery of costs through the courts.
- 5.3 If a direct debit is cancelled by a student a £20 administration fee will be applied to the students account, and all outstanding fees will become payable immediately.
- 5.4 If a direct debit is rejected due to a lack of funds, a £20 administration fee will be payable to cover the extra administration involved. In these cases a student will be provided a 7 day grace period to settle the instalment and continue with the instalment plan. If the installment value remains outstanding, all fees will become payable immediately.
- 5.5 If a direct debit payment is refused more than twice, then the option for the student to pay via an instalment plan will be withdrawn and any outstanding amount will become payable immediately in full.

Student & Apprenticeship Fees and Charges

- 6.1 Students funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) will be charged according to the Funding Guidelines given in the current specifications for further education colleges.
- 6.2 Fees for courses subject to Advanced Learner Loans will be charged at the maximum loans value as advised by the ESFA.
- 6.3 Fees will be charged to the sponsoring employers of students who enroll on Work Based Learning programmes, including Apprenticeships.
- 6.4 The total fee charged to a student will comprise some or all of the following components; tuition fees, materials, examination costs, visits/residential costs. (This does not apply to Apprentices, please see Apprenticeship section).

Student type	Charges for	No charges for
16-18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandatory visits and residential trips Optional materials and equipment that can be retained Optional residential trips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tuition fees First sitting of examinations Consumables and the use of equipment
19-24 with learning difficulties/disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mandatory visits and residential trips Optional materials and equipment that can be retained Optional residential trips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tuition fees First sitting of examinations Consumables and the use of equipment
19+ without fee remission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tuition fees First sitting of examinations Materials, consumables and the use of equipment Mandatory visits and residential Optional residential trips 	
19+ on fee remission	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Optional materials and equipment that can be Retained Optional residential trips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tuition fees First sitting of examinations Consumables and the use of equipment Mandatory visits and residential trips
19+ Advanced Learner Loans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tuition fees Optional residential trips 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First sitting of examinations Materials and consumables Mandatory Visits and residential trips
Higher Education Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tuition fees Material fees, equipment or clothing (the cost of which will be published to the student prior to enrolment) Optional activities and visits, where the indicative cost will be published to students in advance of enrolment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> First sitting of examinations Mandatory visits or trips

Non-Government funded Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tuition fees • First sitting of examinations • Materials, consumables and the use of equipment • Mandatory visits and residential trips • Optional residential trips 	
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- 6.5 If a student changes courses, the student may be liable for additional fees in relation to the new course.
- 6.6 Courses covering multiple years will be charged annually, with exception of Apprenticeships.
- 6.7 It is the responsibility of the student to provide the correct information for fee assessment purposes before enrolment. If at a later date correct information comes to light that renders a student liable for fees, they will be charged.

Awarding Body Registrations and Examinations

- 7.1 External applicants who are not enrolled at Activate Learning will not be entered for examinations.
- 7.2 Other than in exceptional circumstances, if a current student is entered for a re-sit examination they will have to pay all the examination fees regardless of age. Unless through an Apprenticeship where the contract with their employer details re-sit charges.
- 7.3 An appropriate Faculty Director will decide whether the re-sit charge should be waived.
- 7.4 If students are required to register directly with professional awarding bodies, the registration is not paid at enrolment but is paid directly to the professional awarding body by the student. The courses that are subject to these conditions are mainly professional courses, such as AAT, IPD and CIM.
- 7.5 When examination and registration costs are payable direct to the examining body, it will be made clear in the Activate Learning prospectuses and/or course fact sheets.

Amendment to fees

- 8.1 All fees are charged on an annual basis, with the exception of Apprenticeships.
- 8.2 Fees are reviewed annually, and Apprenticeship funding bands are updated by the Institute for Apprenticeships.
- 8.3 Although Activate Learning will endeavor to not change course fees from those which are published, we reserve the right to do so.

Bursaries

- 9.1 Students may be eligible for grants to contribute towards certain cost of study

through Activate Learning bursary scheme. The Advice and Admissions team can advise on eligibility, or HELP office team for Higher Education.

- 9.2 Bursary fund applications should be submitted to the Advice and Admissions team, or HELP office team for Higher Education.
- 6.8 Activate Learning will require documentary evidence of the below, where relevant, to assess whether they are eligible for fee remission:
- Age
 - Identity
 - Residency Status
 - Previous Qualifications

Higher Education Fees

- 10.1 The Office for Students (OFS) provides the national fee framework in which maximum fees levels are approved.
- 10.2 Higher Education students are not entitled to any fee remission.
- 10.3 Higher Education Students studying Apprenticeship programmes will be managed through both the ESFA and OFS frameworks.

International Students

- 11.1 International Students are enrolled onto courses on the provision that a visa is granted.
- 11.2 The student needs to pay at least 50% of their course fees (inclusive of the £21.00 CAS fee) to confirm their place on the course before the visa process can begin.
- 11.3 Once the student's visa is approved, the remaining balance is to be paid before or at enrolment.
- 11.4 In case the visa is rejected, the paid fees are refunded minus a £200.00 administration fee plus the £21.00 CAS fee if applied.

Advanced Learner Loans

- 12.1 If a student chooses to take out an Advanced Learner Loan they will be subject to the terms and conditions laid down by the Students Loan Company.
- 12.2 If a student applies for an Advanced Learner Loan and it is rejected or refused, the student will become liable for settlement of the fee in full in accordance with the requirement of the fees policy.

14–16 Year-olds and students from schools

- 13.1 For students who are under 16 and studying at school and are completing

courses at Activate Learning, the student's school will be liable to pay the fee.

- 13.2 For individual students who are not on a school roll, an agreement is made with the local Education Authority or other statutorily funded body about the acceptance of the student and a transfer fee is agreed and will be collected by funding returns.
- 13.3 The fees for new arrivals into the country are agreed with the local authority and are collected by funding returns.

Apprenticeships

- 14.1 Apprenticeships are funded via either of two government funding routes
- i) Levy*,
 - ii) Non-Levy**, which may require employer contributions.

*A levy employer has a payroll of a minimum of £3mil and pays a % in to an approved Apprenticeship funding system

**A non-levy employer has a payroll of less than £3mil and is required to pay a contribution towards their Apprentice where the remaining funding is provided by the ESFA

- 14.2 A levy employer authorises the release of levy funds, through the Government Apprenticeship Service website to pay Activate Learning for their services.
- 14.3 If a levy employer overspends their levy pot they will be invoiced for their proportion of the difference, in accordance with the apprentice levy government rules.
- 14.4 A non-levy employer, will be liable for a proportion of the apprenticeship fees, the remainder being government funded. Unless they have 49 or less employees and their Apprentice is under the age of 19 at the start of their programme. This is subject to change in line with Government funding requirements
- 14.5 The employer contribution can be paid via an instalment plan or in full by invoice:
- Instalment plans will be collected via direct debit, in equal amounts where possible:
 - Course duration 12-22 months will be taken in 10 instalments
 - Course duration 23-35 months will be 20 instalments
 - Course duration 36+ months will be 30 instalments
 - Instalments will be taken in equal amounts, or as close to equal as possible.
 - Invoices will be raised for the full amount, with 30 day standard payment terms applied.
- 14.6 If no funds are released within 2 months of apprenticeship enrolment, or within 30 days of invoice, we reserve the right to suspend the Apprentice, as the ESFA will withdraw funding if employer fees are not collected, this may lead to the student being unable to obtain their qualification.
- 14.7 If an apprentice withdraws or changes employer, the corrected apportionment of fees will be allocated. If invoiced then a credit will be raised, and if paid by direct debit then the direct debit will be cancelled.

- 14.8 All fees related to Apprenticeship programmes are subject to contracting terms and ESFA funding requirements.

Cytech Courses

- 15.1 All fees for Cytech courses are payable in advance of the course date.

Student Withdrawals

- 16.1 If a student withdraws after more than two weeks, there is no entitlement to a refund unless there are extenuating circumstances. This is at the discretion of the Executive Director of the Faculty. In order to assess whether you have extenuating circumstances, you must write to the Executive Director of the Faculty providing evidence before your circumstances can be considered.
- 16.2 If a student withdraws after more than two weeks and there are no extenuating circumstances, fees may be reviewed by an appropriate Faculty Director.
- 16.3 If a student withdraws from a course funded through Advanced Learner Loans, the fees will be adjusted to reflect the correct apportionment in relation to the time attended.

Fee Refunds

- 17.1 In the event that Activate Learning cancels a course, all fees paid will be refunded. This does not apply to Apprenticeship workshops and classes which may be flexed from time to time.
- 17.2 The table below details the circumstances when a student can request a fee refund:

Reason	Value of Refund	Evidence Required
Withdrawing for a serious medical reason	The refund will be calculated, pro rata, according to the number of weeks attended	A doctor's certificate needs to be submitted with the application for a refund on medical grounds
The student has never attended the course or withdraws within two weeks (for courses longer than 10 weeks)	A full refund will be processed	The student should request the refund in writing

- 17.4 If a change is made to the course offered, where the student has accepted their place, the student can request compensation for additional costs incurred.
- 17.5 Refunds will be given to a student where it is agreed payment will come from another source, for example an employer, the discretionary fund or a student loan. This is to occur only after appropriate evidence is received prior to the refund. All refunds will be made once a completed refund form signed by the department budget holder.

- 17.6 If as part of a formal complaint the complainant requests a refund of fees and/or compensation; the investigating manager must make a recommendation to the faculty budget holder. The budget holder can authorise the refund and/or compensation, if appropriate, as a part of the investigation outcome.
- 17.7 Costs will be deducted from refunds to cover examination costs and registration fees.
- 17.8 Refunds will be made by BACs, with the exception of web payments within 90 days. These will be refunded via web payment.
- 17.9 ESOL students will be refunded in cash if they paid by cash and don't have a UK bank account.
- 17.9 Refunds are processed weekly.
- 17.10 Any application for refunds or compensation need to be applied for via Student Services or by making a complaint.
- 17.11 If the student wishes to appeal against any decision made they should write to the Group Finance Director clearly stating the grounds for appeal. If the student feels that their application for refund or compensation was not handled appropriately they may seek redress through the Activate Learning's Complaints Procedure.
- 17.12 Any dispute in relation to Apprenticeship provision will be dealt with in line with the dispute clauses in the employer contract.

Annex 1. – Fee Instalment Plans for the Academic Year

Instalments commence from the month of enrolment not the course start date

All payments (except initial payment) will be taken on the first working day on or after the 1st of each month

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Months to pay
Sept Long	40%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%													7
Sept Short	40%	30%	30%																	3
Oct Long		40%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%												7
Oct Short		40%	30%	30%																3
Nov Long			40%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%											7
Nov Short			40%	30%	30%															3
Dec Long				40%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%										7
Dec Short				40%	30%	30%														3
Jan Long					40%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%									7
Jan Short					40%	30%	30%													3
Feb Long						40%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%								7
Feb Short						40%	30%	30%												3
Mar Long							40%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%							7
Mar Short							40%	30%	30%											3
Apr Long								40%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%						7
Apr Short								40%	30%	30%										3
May Long									40%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%					7
May Short									40%	30%	30%									3
June Long										40%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%				7
June Short										40%	30%	30%								3
July Long											40%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%			7
July Short											40%	30%	30%							3
Aug Long												40%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%		7
Aug Short												40%	30%	30%						3

Annex 3 – Useful Links

- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-education-funding-guidance> - link to ESFA funding guidance for 16 to 18 year olds
- <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/sfa-funding-rules> - link to ESFA funding guidance for students aged 19+
- <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance> - link to Student Finance England for Higher Education courses
- <http://www.slc.co.uk/> - link to Student Loan Company website
- <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-levy-how-it-will-work/apprenticeship-levy-how-it-will-work#pay-apprenticeship-levy> – link to Apprenticeship Levy guidance