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## Tuition Fees Procedure

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## Procedure Statement

The Tuition Fees Policy refers to the key principles to follow. This procedure offers further help and guidance in relation to how to apply the Tuition Fees Policy.

## How to use this document

- ✓ If marked with a tick there is no change compared with the “Tuition Fees Policy”.
- ❖ If marked with this symbol there is additional guidance in relation to the “Tuition Fees Policy”.

Abbreviations used throughout this document are:

- AL - Activate Learning
- DD - Direct Debit
- ESFA - Education and Skills Funding Agency
- FE - Further Education
- HE - Higher Education
- OFS – Office for Students
- SLC - Student Loans Company

## Scope

- ❖ The Tuition Fees 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
  - Students who are under 16 years old
  - Advanced Learner Loans (19+ year olds)
  - International Students
  - Apprenticeships
  - Cycle Academy
- ✓ The fees policy encompasses all fees and charges associated with courses offered by Activate Learning. This includes:
  - Tuition fees
  - Registration and examination fees
  - Trip fees
  - Kit and Material fees
  - Travel contributions
  - Student Accommodation
  - Administration Fees

## Student Fees and Charges

- ✓ This Policy will be reviewed by the Finance Department and approved by the Corporation on an annual basis.
- ✓ Fees are charged annually, except FE courses where a loan is available. FE loan courses are quoted for the entire duration of the programme, to enable the full loan value to be applied for. If a student is self-funding, denied a loan, or any other means than via an Advanced Learner Loan, fees will be charged annually.
- ❖ Apprenticeship funding bands are updated and charged in-line with the Institute for Apprenticeships.

- ❖ If it is found that information provided at enrolment was incorrect, fees will be amended based on the corrected information.
- ✓ AL will endeavor to not change course fees from those which are published, however, reserves the right to do so, prior to the commencement of the course.

## Further Education Fees

- ✓ Students non-funded and co-funded will be charged in line with ESFA Policy.
- ❖ Students will be made aware if they are eligible for an Advanced Learner Loan. Fees for courses subject to Advanced Learner Loans will be charged at the maximum loans value as advised by the ESFA.
- ❖ The total fees charged to a student will depend on their age, previous qualifications and financial circumstances. The below table gives further breakdown:

Student type	Charges for	No charges for
16–18-Year-Old	Mandatory visits and residential trips Optional materials and equipment that can be retained. Optional residential trips	Tuition fees First sitting of examinations Consumables and the use of equipment
19-24 with learning difficulties/disabilities	Mandatory visits and residential trips Optional materials and equipment that can be retained. Optional residential trips	Tuition fees First sitting of examinations Consumables and the use of equipment
19+ without fee remission	Tuition fees First sitting of examinations Materials, consumables, and the use of equipment Mandatory visits and residential Optional residential trips	
19+ on fee remission	Optional materials and equipment that can be retained. Optional residential trips	Tuition fees First sitting of examinations Consumables and the use of equipment Mandatory visits and residential trips
19+ Advanced Learner Loans	Tuition fees Optional residential trips	First sitting of examinations Materials and consumables Mandatory visits and residential trips
Higher Education Students	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	First sitting of examinations Mandatory visits or trips
Non-Government funded Students	Tuition fees First sitting of examinations Materials, consumables, and the use of equipment Mandatory visits and residential trips Optional residential trips	

- ✓ If a student changes courses, the student may be liable for additional fees in relation to the new course.
- ❖ Courses covering multiple years will be charged annually, except for Apprenticeships and courses where a loan is applied for. These will be charged in full at the start of the course and claimed in line with funding guidelines.
- ✓ It is the responsibility of the student to provide the correct information and evidence for fee assessment purposes. Incorrect data given at the point of enrolment may give rise to further charges.

## Higher Education Fees

- ✓ The OFS provides a national framework in which tuition fee levels are agreed.
- ✓ HE students are not entitled to fee remission.
- ✓ Higher level qualifications delivered as part of an Apprenticeship programme are to be funded through Apprenticeship eligible funding routes only.
- ❖ Students will be made aware if eligible to apply for a loan via the Student Loan Company.

## International Students

- ✓ International students require a visa, prior to studying in the UK.
- ✓ Students must pay 50% of the fees to reserve their place on the course. The remaining balance must be paid prior to or at enrolment, following visa approval.
- ✓ If the students visa application is rejected, fees will be refunded subject to an administration fee.

## Students under 16 Years Old

- ✓ Fees incurred for students who are under 16 and enrolled at a school, will be paid directly by the student's school.
- ✓ Fees incurred for students who are not on a school roll (including international), will be funded by ESFA.

## Apprenticeships

- ✓ All fees related to Apprenticeship programmes are subject to contracting terms and ESFA funding requirements.
- ❖ Apprenticeships are funded via either of two government funding routes.  
Levy\*,  
Non-Levy\*\*, which may require employer contributions.
- ❖ A levy employer must authorise the release of levy funds, through the Government Apprenticeship Service website to pay Activate Learning for their services. Generally, 80% is divided throughout the duration of the course, and the remaining 20% once the course is completed.
- ✓ If a Levy employer incurs apprenticeship fees more than their "Pot" value they will be invoiced for fees not recovered, in accordance with the government apprentice levy rules.
- ❖ A **levy** employer has a payroll of a minimum of £3million and pays a monthly contribution into an approved Apprenticeship funding scheme.
- ❖ A **non-levy** employer has a payroll of less than £3million and is required to pay a contribution towards

their Apprentice where the remaining funding is provided by the ESFA. ESFA advise the proportion awarded, generally 90-95%, the remaining 5-10% being the employer contribution. Employers must not pass any fees onto the apprentice.

- ❖ A small employer, defined as having 49 or less employees, generally follows the same rules as non-levy employers. Except when their Apprentice is aged 16-18, or 19-24 with EHCP in place, at the start of their programme, this is 100% covered by funding. This is subject to change in line with Government funding requirements.
- ❖ Employers will be invoiced for non-funded contributions, with standard 30-day payment terms.
- ✓ If an employer fails to pay their apprenticeship contribution within agreed timescales AL reserves the right to suspend the Apprentice. This may lead to the student being unable to obtain their qualification.
- ✓ If an apprentice withdraws or changes employer, fees will be prorated accordingly.

## Awarding Body Registrations and Examinations

- ✓ We do not enter external applicants who are not enrolled at AL unless there are extenuating circumstances and these can be accommodated without disruption to our enrolled students.
- ❖ Students entered for re-sit examinations are liable for the examination fees regardless of age. Unless through an Apprenticeship where the contract with their employer details re-sit charges.
- ❖ In exceptional circumstances, an appropriate Faculty Director will decide whether a re-sit charge should be waived.
- ❖ Some students are required to register with professional awarding bodies as part of their course. This must be done directly with the awarding body and may incur additional costs. The courses that are subject to these conditions are mainly professional courses, such as AAT, IPD and CIM.
- ❖ 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.

## Payment of fees

- ✓ Full fees must be paid at enrolment. Payment of student fees are the responsibility of the student, as laid out in the "Fees" section under "Learning Agreement" of the enrolment form.
- ❖ Payment plans may be arranged:

In most instances students are expected to settle all sums due at the point of enrolment. The following exceptions have been agreed to help students who wish to spread the cost of their course:

- **Students applying for a Bursary:** A bursary towards a course will generally be 50% of the total course fee. Therefore 50% must be paid at enrolment and a direct debit mandate must be completed for remaining course fees to be collected should a bursary application be denied.
- **Students paying by payment plan** must pay 30% of their course fees at enrolment and submit a completed DD mandate for future payments to be taken in monthly installments (DD criteria must be met – see [here](#)).
- **Students Applying for a loan to fund their course** must provide evidence that a loan has been approved or that a loan application is pending (from SLC for HE; or Advanced Learner Loan for FE). Further information can be found [here](#).
- **Students who are being funded by their employer** are required to provide a signed letter of

sponsorship for settlement of fees at point of enrollment (see guidance [here](#)).

- **AL Staff whose course is being internally funded** must provide a copy of their approved “Learning and Development Request form” or a signed letter of sponsorship from the budget holder paying for the course.
- ✓ If a student withdraws from the course, they will remain liable for any outstanding balance.
- ❖ Students studying on a **Higher National** programme may request to pay course fees via direct debit instalments (see [here](#) for further details)
- ❖ Higher level qualifications supported through the apprenticeship programme are to be funded through Apprenticeship eligible funding routes only.
- ✓ All payments are to be paid to Advice and Admissions, the Contact Centre, or Finance who will record this on the student record, within REMS. Under no circumstances should other departments take payment. Failure to adhere to this may result in disciplinary action.
- ❖ All fees for Cycle Academy are payable in advance of the course date.

### Direct Debit Guidance

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

- 30% of the course fee is paid at enrolment.
- A direct debit mandate is completed at point of enrolment and given to the enrolment personnel.
- The student must have a U.K. bank account.
- The course must be delivered over 15 weeks or more.
- The course fee must be:
  - £250.00 or over for a short plan, or
  - £500.00 or over for a long plan.
- The remaining 70% of the course fee is paid over:
  - 7 equal instalments of 10% each for long plan, or
  - 2 equal instalments of 35% each for short plan
- The course must be paid in full at least one month prior to the end date of the course, otherwise fewer instalments may be required, which will increase the monthly direct debit amount.

HE students may request to pay course fees in instalments subject to the following conditions:

- 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 £500.00.
- Fees must be paid in four instalments in line with Student Finance England payments; 25% on enrolment, followed by 3 further instalments of 25% each, taken on a bi-monthly basis.  
i.e. 25% at enrolment in September, 25% in November, 25% in January and final 25% in March.
- In line with Government guidelines, no administrative fee will be charged for students paying by instalments.

Please refer to Appendix 1, for schedule of monthly instalments for the academic year.

All direct debit payments will be taken on, or immediately after, the 1<sup>st</sup> of the month.

AL is required to inform the payer, in advance, of the value and dates of the payments to be taken. A letter will be sent to the payer/account holder for the DD. If the student is not the payer, please be aware that this advance notice letter will require AL to share some of the student's information, namely student name, course title, campus, and value of the course fees being paid by DD.

If a direct debit is cancelled by a student all-outstanding fees will become payable immediately.

If a direct debit is rejected due to a lack of funds, 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.

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.

In exceptional circumstances other payment plans may be considered, providing the initial deposit of 30% has been paid and the direct debit plan being proposed will see the course paid in full at least one month prior to the end of the course date. This must be approved by the Revenue Manager.

### **Student Loan Guidance**

Students are responsible for their Loan application and ensuring their Loan has been approved. Loans are provided through a 3<sup>rd</sup> party, not Activate Learning.

- If a student chooses to take out a loan, they will be subject to the terms and conditions laid down by the loan company.
- If the loan has not been approved at point of enrolment, a direct debit mandate must be completed and handed in at enrolment. This will be held until we receive confirmation that the loan has been approved. The onus is on the student to provide this to the college.
- If the College does not receive confirmation the loan has been approved within 8 weeks of the course start date, the student will be liable for the fees and the first instalment will be collected by direct debit on, or shortly after, 1<sup>st</sup> of the following month.
- If / when the loan is approved the fees paid by the student will be refunded to them, providing they do not owe other money to the college.
- There may be instances when approvals of loans from the Advance Learner Loan company may be delayed through no fault of the student. In these instances, if the student can evidence a complete application has been submitted, the direct debit collection will not be initiated.

### **Sponsorship Guidance**

If a student is being sponsored for their course, i.e. where a local council or an employer is paying the course fees on the students behalf, Students are responsible for obtaining the letter from their sponsor. However, should the sponsor default on payment, the student will be liable for the fees.

Where a sponsor letter is being provided the following information is required on company headed paper (this includes AL Group Service staff):

- Students name
- Course name
- Academic year
- Value being contributed.
- Invoice address
- Email address for submission of invoice
- Signed by manager (or for AL Group Staff, a budget holder)

Invoice terms are 30 days from date of invoice, and full invoice value must be paid.

### **Bursaries**

- ✓ Students may be eligible for support with tuition fees through AL's bursary scheme. See "Student Finance Policy and Procedure" here . Alternatively, Advice and Admissions can advise on eligibility, or the HELP office team for HE.
- ❖ Course Cost Bursary fund applications should be submitted to the Advice and Admissions team, or HELP office team for Higher Education.

### **Accommodation**

Keys will only be given out if payment has been received in full or a direct debit has been set up.

A Direct Debit instalment plan is subject to the following conditions:

The following must be paid prior to the key being given:

- £60.00 booking fee to secure the room.

- £150.00 damage deposit (refundable at the end of stay, less deductions for lost keys or damages etc).
- £600.00 deposit (or £200.00 for those confirmed as receiving a bursary).

The remainder of the balance will be collected in 6 monthly instalments (9 in exceptional cases) providing full balance will be obtained prior to the leaving date. Otherwise, fewer instalments will be required, which will increase the monthly direct debit amount.

The student may be asked to leave the accommodation in the event of non-payment.

## Methods of Payment

- ❖ The accepted methods of payment are:
  - Most major Debit or Credit Cards (excluding American Express).
  - Bank transfer. Please use student ID as reference.
  - Online payment via portal or enrolments site.
  - Loan (via Student Loan Company for HE; or Advanced Learner Loan for FE)
  - Direct Debit, if eligible (see [here](#))
- ❖ In certain circumstances, other payment methods can be used including:
  - Cash up to the value of £100.00. Each cash payment must be 30 days apart.
  - Cheque
  - International students without a U.K. bank account may pay their full ESOL course fees in cash.

## How to Pay

AL will require your student ID to find your account. This can be found on your lanyard and is generally an eight-digit number.

- ❖ To make a card payment over the phone please call 0800 612 6008.
- ❖ You can make payment in person at your local campus Advice Centre.
- ❖ If you wish to set up a direct debit plan you can speak to your local campus Advice Centre or by calling finance on 01865 551 598.
- ❖ To pay via bank transfer, please use the bank details at the bottom of your invoice.
- ❖ REMs Pay – via Online Payment Portal.

## Non-payment of Fees

- ✓ Enrolment on a course will be refused if a student has unpaid amounts remaining from previous academic years or from a previous course.
- ✓ In the event of non-payment AL may block card and ALO access. While an account is blocked a student shall not be entitled to attend class or have access to learning resources. To reinstate privileges the student must make full payment of outstanding fees or contact the Sales Ledger team.
- ✓ In the event of non-payment AL may withdraw the student from their course.
- ✓ AL reserves the right to take any reasonable steps to recover any outstanding debt in connection with unpaid fees including undertaking legal proceedings to recover such debts. AL reserves the right to seek reimbursement of reasonable costs associated with the recovery of outstanding debts. When an account is passed to a debt collection agency the debt referral fee is 15% of the outstanding balance, or £25.00, whichever is higher. The debt referral fee is added to the outstanding balance, becoming part of the total amount owed by the student to AL.

## Student Withdrawals

- ✓ Application for withdrawal must be applied for via the faculty in the first instance.



- ❖ Please contact the faculty coordinator for withdrawals.
- ✓ Non-attendance does not constitute withdrawal.

### **FE Full-time Courses**

- ✓ 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, as outlined by the ESFA and Student Finance England.
- ✓ Students are entitled to withdraw from a course within two weeks of the course start date and receive a refund of fees paid.
- ✓ 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 Faculty Director.

### **FE Part-time Courses (15 weeks or less)**

- ✓ Students enrolled on a part time course are able to withdraw from a course up to two weeks prior to the course start date. A refund of fees paid will be given less an administration charge.
- ✓ Student's withdrawing after this date are not entitled to a refund. However, in extenuating circumstances, this may be reviewed by an appropriate Faculty Director.
- ❖ In all cases an administration fee will be charged at 20% of the course fee (subject to a minimum charge of £10.00). This will be noted on the refund form, by the faculty, to advise Institutional Effectiveness team to leave a fee / percentage of a fee on the system, against the relevant course code.

### **HE Courses**

- ❖ Students withdrawing from HE Courses may be liable to pay a proportion of the fee, in accordance with SLC Terms and Conditions.
- ❖ For full-time students this becomes liable at the start of each term.
- ❖ For part-time students will becomes liable after two weeks of the course start date, then at the start of the following 2 terms.
- ❖ The values that withdrawn students are liable for are:
  - 25% of the tuition fee if they suspend or leave in term 1.
  - 50% of the tuition fee if they suspend or leave in term 2.
  - 100% of the tuition fee if they suspend or leave in term 3.

## **Fee Refunds**

- ✓ If AL cancels a course, which is yet to start, fees paid will be refunded.
- ✓ All refunds will be paid back to the source from which they came, i.e, If student paid then student will be refunded, if employer or loan company paid then the relevant organisation will be refunded.
- ❖ In the event a course is full, and no alternative is acceptable, the student can be refunded via the normal student refund request route.
- ❖ 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 <b>(courses longer than 15 weeks)</b>	A full refund will be processed	The student should request the refund in writing
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- ❖ Refunds will be given to a student where it is agreed payment will come from another source, i.e. employer, bursary award or student loan. This is providing the student does not owe any other money to the college for which the value paid will then be applied to first. This is to occur only after appropriate evidence is received prior to the refund. Refunds will only be made once a completed refund form signed by the department budget holder has been received, and fees removed from the system.
- ❖ Costs will be deducted from refunds to cover any costs and registration fees.
- ❖ Refunds will be processed weekly via BACs or by PayPal (if refund is requested within 180 days of fees being paid). Bank details must be obtained and provided to finance.
- ❖ ESOL students who paid their fees by cash can be refunded in cash. However, finance will need 10 days' notice to arrange this as cash is not held on site at any campus.
- ❖ Application for refunds must be applied for via Advice and Admissions or Faculty and provide beneficiary's bank details.

## Complaints

- ✓ Complaints will be dealt with in accordance with AL's [Customer Comments, Suggestions and Complaints Policy and Procedure](#).
- ❖ Disputes in relation to Apprenticeships will be handled as outlined within the employer contract.

## References

This procedure should be used in conjunction with the "[Tuition Fees Policy](#)".

Reference is also made to the [Customer Comments, Suggestions and Complaints Policy and Procedure](#).

Here are links to the most useful Further and Higher Education information.

- ESFA funding guidance for 16 to 18 year olds <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-education-funding-guidance>
- ESFA funding guidance for students aged 19+ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/sfa-funding-rates>
- Student Finance England for Higher Education courses <https://www.gov.uk/student-finance>
- Student Loan Company website <http://www.slc.co.uk/>
- SLC's A Guide to terms and conditions 2023 to 2023 <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/student-loans-a-guide-to-terms-and-conditions/student-loans-a-guide-to-terms-and-conditions-2023-to-2024>
- Apprenticeship levy guidance <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/manage-apprenticeship-funds>

## Appendices 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 by direct debit on or shortly after the 1st of each month.

	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Months to pay
Sept	30%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%										8
Sept	30%	35%	35%															3
Sept HE	25%		25%		25%		25%											4
Oct		30%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%									8
Oct		30%	35%	35%														3
Oct HE		25%		25%		25%		25%										4
Nov			30%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%								8
Nov			30%	35%	35%													3
Nov HE			25%		25%		25%		25%									4
Dec				30%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%							8
Dec				30%	35%	35%												3
Dec HE				25%		25%		25%		25%								4
Jan					30%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%%						8
Jan					30%	35%	35%											3
Feb						30%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%%					8
Feb						30%	35%	35%										3
Mar							30%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%%				8
Mar							30%	35%	35%									3
Apr								30%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%%			8
Apr								30%	35%	35%								3
May									30%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%	10%%		8
May									30%	35%	35%							3