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Student Fees Policy

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1. POLICY STATEMENT

This policy sets out how Activate Learning applies fee charges for courses funded by the Department for Education (DfE), the Office for Students (OfS), Advanced Learner Loans (ALL) administered by the Student Loans Company (SLC), and commercial ("full cost") courses. Fee income forms an essential part of Activate Learning's resources and supports the delivery of high-quality teaching, learning, and student services.

An alternative format of this policy is available on request. Please contact the Compliance Team: complianceteam@activatelearning.ac.uk.

2. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to:

- set out the basis on which tuition fees and associated charges are applied.
- explain the methods available for payment of fees.
- define the circumstances in which refunds, remissions or compensation may be considered.
- outline the arrangements that apply when a student withdraws, defers, or fails to pay fees; and
- ensure compliance with relevant funding requirements, and legislation.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to students enrolled on Activate Learning programmes, including:

- Further Education provision;
- Higher Education provision;
- apprenticeship provision, where relevant to fee charging or employer contribution; and
- other funded and non-funded courses delivered by Activate Learning.

Where separate contractual terms, funding rules or awarding body requirements apply, those requirements must also be followed.

4. DEFINITIONS

For the purposes of this policy:

- **Student** means any individual enrolled on a programme or course with Activate Learning.
- **Fee** means any tuition fee, registration fee, examination fee, material charge, or other charge payable in relation to a programme of study.
- **Refund** means repayment of fees or charges previously paid.
- **Remission** means a reduction or waiver of fees in line with funding rules or approved criteria.
- **Compensation** means financial or non-financial redress where this is due under applicable contractual or regulatory requirements.
- **Withdrawal** means the formal end of a student's enrolment on a programme before completion.
- **Deferral** means an approved pause or postponement of study, where permitted.

Abbreviations used throughout this policy are:

AL – Activate Learning
FE – Further Education
HE – Higher Education
DD – Direct Debit
CMA – Competitions and Markets Authority
OfS – Office for Students
SLC – Student Loans Company
ALL – Advanced Learner Loan
DfE – Department for Education
SFE – Student Finance England

5. RESPONSIBILITIES

5.1. **Students** are responsible for:

- providing accurate information at enrolment.
- understanding of any fees and charges that apply to their programme.
- ensuring that fees are paid in accordance with agreed payment terms.
- informing Activate Learning promptly if their circumstances change; and
- following the correct process if they wish to withdraw or request a refund.

5.2. **Activate Learning** is responsible for:

- publishing clear information about fees and charges;
- applying fee rules consistently;
- processing payments and refunds in accordance with this policy and any applicable procedures;
- providing students with information about payment options and fee liability; and
- complying with relevant funding, regulatory and consumer protection requirements.

5.3. **Faculty, enrolment staff, and Advice & Admissions**

Relevant staff are responsible for:

- providing accurate fee information to students.
- ensuring withdrawals and changes in enrolment status are recorded promptly.
- supporting the administration of fee collection, refunds, and remissions.
- applying this policy consistently.

6. STUDENT FEES AND OTHER CHARGES

General Principles

6.1. This Policy is reviewed annually, or earlier where required by changes to legislation, regulation, funding rules, or operational need, by the Finance Department and approved by AL's Group Executive Team (GET).

6.2. Fees are charged annually.

6.2..1. With the exception where a FE course has an available loan, the total fee for the entire course is quoted and charged upfront so students can apply for the full loan amount.

6.2..2. Where a student is self-funding, is denied a loan, fees revert to being charged annually.

6.3. Any fee increases for HE provision will not exceed the Retail Price Index or the maximum tuition fee limits set by the OfS, where applicable.

6.4. Fees for apprenticeships are charged in-line with DfE and "The Institute for Apprenticeships and Technical Education" (IfATE) requirements and are subject to any applicable contractual arrangements.

6.5. If accurate information **has not** been provided at enrolment, fees will be amended based on the correct information.

6.6. If transferred to a course with a higher fee, students are liable to pay the difference in course cost.

7. FURTHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

7.1. Students may be required to provide evidence of eligibility for any fee remission, funding support, or reduced fee rate.

7.2. Where a student is found not to be eligible for a remission or funded place, the student will be liable for the applicable fee.

7.3. The total fees charged will depend on a student's age, previous qualifications, and financial circumstances. Details of the fees charged for FE students can be found on the course pages of our website: Further Education - Activate Learning.

8. HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

8.1. **Student finance (loans)**. Eligible students may access loans for tuition fees and living costs. Students must confirm eligibility (including residency status, course type, and previous study) and apply through the SFE website. Further information is available on the Government's step by step guide to applying.

8.2. **Payment of loan funds**. Where applicable, tuition fee loans are paid directly to AL and/or a partner university. Maintenance loans are paid to the student in instalments during the academic year. Students may use the student finance calculator to estimate entitlement.

8.3. **Student Protection Plan (HE)**. The OfS requires HE providers to maintain a Student Protection Plan. Students must read the Student Protection Plan alongside this policy. It outlines the risks that could affect a learner's ability to continue their studies, the measures in place to mitigate those risks, and Activate Learning's response if they arise.

8.4. **Tuition fees (prescribed HE courses)**. Tuition fees for prescribed HE courses are reviewed annually and set in line with OfS tuition fee limits. Published fees apply to the first year of study. For programmes longer than one year, fees for continuing years remain the same, except where fees are set by Oxford Brookes University or the University of Reading; in those cases, fees may increase in line with RPI and the relevant university fee policy.

8.5. **Tuition fees (HE short courses / standalone units).** Fees for HE short courses and standalone modules/units are charged up to the maximum pro-rata cost of the full qualification. i.e., if full course fee was £6,000 for 120 credits, then the cost of a standalone unit equal to 15 credits would be £750.

8.6. **Publication of HE tuition fees.** HE tuition fees for academic year 2027/28 are published on the relevant programme pages of AL's Higher Education website.

8.7. **Additional HE charges**
HE students may also be charged:

Fee Charges for	Reference
Repeat of modules/units – charged at the pro-rata module/unit cost based on the annual tuition fee	Assessment Procedure
Additional equipment / material fees – published on the course webpage and confirmed in the offer letter	Individual course pages - Courses - Higher Education by Activate Learning
RPEL – the fee charged for assessing an application for "**R**ecognition of **P**rior **E**xperiential **L**earning" application for 2026/27 is £50.00.	Recognition of Prior Learning Procedure

9. APPRENTICESHIP STUDENTS

9.1. All fees related to Apprenticeship programmes are subject to contracting terms laid out by IfATE, and DfE funding requirements.

9.2. Apprenticeships are funded via the Levy or Non-Levy Government funding routes.

9.3. 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.

9.4. A **non-levy** employer is required to pay a contribution towards their Apprentice. Employers must not pass any fees onto the apprentice, as laid out in the government guidelines.

9.5. If an apprentice withdraws or changes employer, the fees will be adjusted based on the time attended.

9.6. 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.

9.7. Higher level qualifications supported through the apprenticeship programme are to be funded through Apprenticeship eligible funding routes only.

10. UNDER 16 YEARS OLD

10.1. Fees incurred for students who are under 16 and enrolled at a school, will be paid directly by the student's school.

10.2. Fees incurred for students who are not on a school roll will be funded by DfE.

11. INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

11.1. AL does not hold a Tier 4 sponsor license and does not accept applications from international students who require student visa sponsorship under that route.

11.2. Any fees applicable to students who are not eligible for home fee status will be communicated before enrolment, where relevant.

12. AWARDING BODY REGISTRATIONS AND EXAMINATIONS

12.1. AL does not enter external applicants in examinations who are not enrolled at AL unless there are mitigating circumstances and these can be accommodated without disruption to our enrolled students.

12.2. Students entered for re-sit examinations are liable for the examination fee regardless of age unless through an Apprenticeship where the contract with their employer details re-sit charges. Fees for re-sits vary significantly from c.£65 - £400 depending on examination board. For further information please contact examsoxford@activatelearning.ac.uk.

12.3. In extenuating circumstances, such as illness or bereavement, an appropriate Faculty Director will consider waiving the re-sit charge.

12.4. When examination and registration costs are payable directly to the awarding body, it will be made clear to students in the relevant AL prospectus, course fact sheets, and website.

12.5. Students required to register with professional awarding bodies, as part of their course, must do this directly with the awarding body; and may incur additional costs. Examples of such are AAT, CIPD, CIM.

13. PAYMENT OF FEES

13.1. 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.

13.2. 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:

13.2..1. **FE Students applying for a Bursary**: A bursary towards a course will be no more than 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.

13.2..2. **Students paying by payment plan** must pay 30% (FE students), 25% (HE students) 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).

13.2..3. **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 ALL for FE). Further information can be found here.

13.2..4. **Students who are being funded by their employer** are required to provide a signed letter of sponsorship at point of enrollment. Further information can be found here.

13.2..5. **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.

13.3. If a student withdraws from the course, they will remain liable for any outstanding course fees. For further information please see section 22.

13.4. Payments must only be taken by the Admissions team (by phone or in person) or Finance; no other departments are permitted to take payments, as these need to be recorded on the student record. Failure to comply may result in disciplinary action being taken against the member of staff concerned.

13.5. All fees for Cycle Academy are payable in advance of the course date.

14. DIRECT DEBIT GUIDANCE

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

14.1. A direct debit mandate is completed at point of enrolment and given to the enrolment personnel.

14.2. All payments will be taken on, or immediately after, the 1st of the month.

14.3. The payer must be paying from a U.K. bank account.

14.4. The DD plan must be finished collecting the full fee at least one month prior to the end date of the course, otherwise fewer instalments will be implemented.

14.5. The course must be delivered over **12 weeks** or more. Minimum course fee of £250.00 applies.

14.6. **For FE Students**:

- 30% of the course fee is paid on enrolment.
- If course delivery is ***less than 30 weeks***; DD will be taken over 2 consecutive monthly instalments of 35% each (**FE Short Plan**).
- If course fee is ***£500.00*** or over and course delivery is ***more than 30 weeks***; DD will be taken over 7 consecutive monthly instalments of 10% each (**FE Long Plan**).

14.7. **For HE Students**:

- 25% of the course fee is paid on enrolment.
- If course delivery is ***less than 30 weeks***; DD will be taken over 3 consecutive monthly instalments of 25% each (**HE Short Plan**).
- If course fee is ***£2,000.00*** or over and ***more than 30 weeks***; DD will be taken over 3 bi-monthly instalments of 25% each (**HE Long Plan**).

14.8. HE students eligible for HE Long Plan, can opt to choose the FE Long Plan. Bi-monthly payments were set up to tailor to HE students who have taken a maintenance loan, FE Long plan may suit students who are self-funding.

14.9. AL is required to provide advance notice to the DD **payer** regarding payments being collected from their bank account. If the student is not the payer, please be aware that this advance notice letter will require AL to share some student information, i.e., student name, course, campus, and value of the fee.

14.10. If a direct debit is cancelled, any outstanding fees will become payable immediately.

14.11. If a direct debit is rejected due to a lack of funds, a student will be provided with 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.

14.12. If a direct debit payment is refused more than twice, the option to pay via an instalment plan will be withdrawn, and all fees will become payable immediately.

14.13. In exceptional circumstances other payment plans may be considered, **providing:**

- The initial deposit of 30% (FE students), 25% (HE students) has been paid.
- The course will fully paid at least one month prior to the end of the course date.
- This must be approved by finance, by emailing salesledger@activatelearning.ac.uk

15. STUDENT LOAN GUIDANCE - FE

15.1. Students are responsible for their Loan application and ensuring their Loan has been approved. SLC will not communicate with the college directly on an individual loan application.

15.2. Loans are provided through SLC, a 3rd party, not Activate Learning. Therefore, if a student chooses to take out a loan, they will be subject to the loan provider's terms and conditions.

15.3. If the ALL has not been approved at point of enrolment, a direct debit mandate must be completed and handed in at enrolment.

15.4. Where the College has not received confirmation that the loan has been approved within 8 weeks of the course start date, the student becomes liable for the tuition fees and must begin making payments towards the course. This is to ensure that, where a loan is not approved or the student is not eligible, fees do not accrue without payment for the period of study undertaken.

15.5. If / when the loan is approved the fees paid by the student will be refunded, providing they do not owe money to the college.

16. SPONSORSHIP GUIDANCE

16.1. Where a third party, employer or sponsor agrees to pay all or part of a student's fees, written confirmation must be provided. It is the student's responsibility to obtain this letter from their sponsor.

16.2. However, should the sponsor default on payment, the student will be liable for the fees. (i.e. if a student leaves an employer but carries on the course, the employer will likely default).

16.3. The following information must be provided on the company's headed paper:

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

16.4. Invoice terms are 30 days from date of invoice.

17. BURSARIES

17.1. Students may be eligible for support, subject to availability. Funding limits apply for further information please refer to:

- **FE students:** Financial Support and Bursaries - Activate Learning or visit the Advice Centre on campus.
- **HE students**: Bursaries - Higher Education by Activate Learning or contact a member of the HE Learning Partnership team: AdminHE@activatelearning.ac.uk.

18. ACCOMMODATION

18.1. Accommodation charges will be charged in line with the "License to Occupy." For further information please visit our website: Accommodation - Merrist Wood College and University Centre.

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

19. METHODS OF PAYMENT

19.1. 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 SLC for HE; or ALL for FE)
- Direct Debit, if eligible and subject to deposit being paid at enrolment

20. HOW TO PAY

Students must quote their student ID when making a payment so that the payment can be allocated correctly. This will be on your lanyard and is generally an eight-digit number.

20.1. Telephone our main number: 0800 612 6008, or Sales Ledger: 01865 551 598 to pay by card, or arrange to set up a direct debit.

20.2. You can make payment in person at your local campus Advice Centre, by card only. **We do not accept cash.**

20.3. To pay via bank transfer, please use the bank details at the bottom of your invoice.

21. NON-PAYMENT OF FEES

21.1. Enrolment will be denied to students with prior outstanding fees.

21.2. In cases of non-payment, AL may take appropriate action to recover the debt. This may include:

21.2..1. issuing reminders and final demands.
21.2..2. cancelling instalment arrangements.
21.2..3. block card/access to college and ALO access.
21.2..4. withdraw a student from their course.
21.2..5. withholding certification or other services, where lawful and appropriate.
21.2..6. refer the outstanding debt for formal recovery action, which may include legal proceedings.

21.3. AL may seek reimbursement for reasonable costs incurred during the debt recovery process.

21.4. Non-payment of fees does not remove the student's liability for the debt.

22. STUDENT WITHDRAWALS

22.1. Students who wish to withdraw must submit their request through the relevant Faculty Coordinator.

22.2. Non-attendance does not constitute a withdrawal.

22.3. **FE Full-time Course Withdrawals**

22.3..1. Students who withdraw within 14 days of the first day of teaching will receive a refund of fees paid.

22.3..2. Students who withdraw after more than 14 days, there is no entitlement to a refund unless there are extenuating circumstances. This is at the discretion of the Faculty Director.

22.3..3. Students who withdraw from an ALL funded course are charged on a pro-rata basis, based on how long they attended, in line with DfE and SLC guidelines.

22.4. **FE Part-time Course (15 weeks or less) Withdrawals**

22.4..1. Students enrolled on a part-time course may withdraw up to two weeks prior to the start date. A refund of any fees paid will be issued, less an administration fee of 20% of the course fee (minimum £10).

22.4..2. Students who withdraw after this date are not entitled to a refund. However, in extenuating circumstances, an appropriate Faculty Director may review this.

22.5. **HE Course Withdrawals**

22.5..1. Students who withdraw within 14 days of the first day of teaching will not be charged.

22.5..2. HE students who withdraw from or defer their studies will be liable for a proportion of the tuition fee, in accordance with SLC, as set out below. Where a student starts their programme at a different point in the academic year, the fee liability will be adjusted on a pro rata basis to reflect the equivalent study period. Students leaving in:

- Term 1: 25% of the tuition fee
- Term 2: 50% of the tuition fee
- Term 3: 100% of the tuition fee

23. REFUNDS

23.1. Where AL cancels a course and no suitable alternative is available or acceptable to the student, the student may receive a refund via the standard student refund process.

23.2. Refunds will be issued to the original payer (if known); if the student paid, the refund will be to the student, if an employer or loan company paid, the refund will be given to the respective organisation.

23.3. The table below further 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 (courses longer than 15 weeks only)	A full refund will be processed	Withdrawal notice, or requested by the student in writing
Cancellation of a programme, part way through	The refund will be calculated, pro rata, according to the number of weeks taught	Student Refund Request by faculty coordinator, or requested by the student in writing

23.4. Refunds will only be processed when all fees have been paid, and the account is fully up to date.

23.5. Costs will be deducted from refunds to cover any costs and registration fees.

23.6. Refunds are processed weekly via BACs or Web Payment. Students must provide bank details, where applicable, to enable Sales Ledger to process a refund.

24. HE COMPENSATION

24.1. Students may be entitled to financial or non-financial redress where it is demonstrated that AL has breached its contract by providing a significantly reduced service. This may include:

- Cancellation of course or tutoring, where alternative qualification or transfer to an alternative institution is unacceptable.
- Failure to provide access to facilities required for the course (e.g., laboratories, art studios).
- Major changes to course content or structure.
- Distress and inconvenience.

AL will make all efforts to return the student to the position they were in before beginning study.

24.2. Students are required to provide evidence for any claim related to maintenance costs or losses suffered to enable AL to consider the claim appropriately and make a suitable award of compensation.

24.3. Where a student makes a claim for losses of paid work, any compensation will be limited to losses equivalent to the expected hours of study required to complete the qualification. AL reserves the right to refuse to reimburse any particularly highly paid work.

24.4. A partner university can also determine compensation.

25. COMPLAINTS AND APPEALS

25.1. Students who are dissatisfied with a decision under this policy may raise the matter through the relevant Activate Learning complaints process.

25.2. HE students who remain dissatisfied after exhausting internal procedures may refer the matter to the Office of the Independent Adjudicator for Higher Education (OIAHE).

25.3. Disputes in relation to Apprenticeships will be managed as outlined within the employer contract.

26. REFERENCES

General:

- AL Customer Compliments, Comments and Complaints Policy and Procedure
- Apprenticeship levy guidance
- IfATE requirements

Further Education:

- Department for Education (DfE) funding guidance for 16- to 18-year-olds
- Department for Education (DfE) funding guidance for students aged 19+
- Student Loan Company
- SLC's A Guide to terms and conditions 2026 to 2027

Higher Education

- Activate Learning Higher Education policies page
- Student Finance England
- Repaying your student loan: Overview - GOV.UK
- Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidance (HE)