

DN Colleges Group

Tuition and Examination Fees Policy 2018/2019

1 Policy Objectives

- 1.1 The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework within which the DN Colleges Group ("the Group") will decide how fee setting, charging and fee refund processes will be devised and operated. The policy also sets a framework for ensuring that comprehensive guidance and information regarding fees for courses subsidised etc is available and accessible to customers and learners, staff and Governors. The policy has been written in accordance with guidance from our funding bodies.

2 Approval of College Fees Policy

- 2.1 The Tuition and Examinations Fees Policy and any subsequent amendments to this policy will be considered by the Finance and Resources Committee for approval by the Corporation.
- 2.2 The Policy will be reviewed annually and any changes recommended will be referred for approval to the Corporation.

3 Policy Statement

- 3.1 Wherever fees apply, it is the Group's policy that they will be collected at the earliest opportunity. This typically means fees will be collected when the learner enrolls. In the case of an employer paying fees, an official purchase order or written authorisation will be required when enrolling, otherwise the learner will be expected to pay fees at the time of enrolment. The same conditions will apply where fees are being paid by Student Finance England, in that official confirmation of fee support must be available at the time of enrolment.
- 3.2 The Group reserves the right to cancel any course or change its charging policy where its costs may result in financial loss; cancel any course where there is a lack of appropriate resources; and/or refuse entry to a course on any non-discriminatory grounds.

4 Further Education Funding

- 4.1 The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) now funds education and skills for children, young people and adults.
- 4.2 The ESFA 16-18 Funding methodology provides funding for students who:
- Are aged 16-18 at 31 August in the start year of their programme
 - Are aged 19 but continuing to study a programme started in a previous academic year (while aged 16-18)
 - Are aged up to 24 who have an Education Health and Care Plan
 - Are studying qualifications identified as fundable for their age group
 - Note - apprentices are funded by the ESFA under their adult education budget

- 4.3 The ESFA adult education budget and Apprenticeships methodologies provide funding for those who:
- Are aged 19 or above on 31 August within the funding year in question (other than apprenticeships or those aged 19 continuing an existing programme started when aged 16-18)
 - Are apprentices, aged 15 or above and have legally left compulsory education
 - Are studying qualifications identified as fundable for their age group

5 National Fee Guidelines

- 5.1 The ESFA Funding methodologies assume that all learners other than those eligible for full fee remission are charged a tuition fee as a contribution towards the costs of their learning (or in the case of apprenticeships this cost must be met by the employer). For 2018/19 the ESFA's assumed tuition fee income for classroom learning remains at 50% of the basic funding value (unweighted rate) for the learning aim, where the student is not in receipt of full fee remission. For apprenticeships not funded by the Levy, this cost is 10% of the agreed price.
- 5.2 The values of ESFA approved courses are published on the Learning Aim Reference Service (LARS). The Group's tuition fees for such courses are set in accordance with these published values, that is, the tuition fee is set at 50% of the published (unweighted rate) LARS value. However, these fees need to allow for adjustment, to take account of the following:
- The financial viability and demand of courses and programmes
 - Affordability of courses and programmes
 - Competitor pricing/market conditions
- 5.3 The ESFA publishes the criteria against which learners are assessed for eligibility to public funding for approved further education courses. These criteria can be found at appendix A and in the funding table at the end of this document.
- 5.4 Learners who are continuing on a learning aim which they enrolled to in a previous academic year will continue to be entitled to the same remission conditions that were operational at the time of their commencement of their study on that learning aim.
- 5.5 Enrolments to new learning aims starting in 2018/19 will be subject to the relevant funding body's eligibility criteria for 2018/19.
- 5.6 The categories of learners eligible for fee remission (where the full funding value is met by ESFA) are:
- ESFA-funded learners as listed under section 4.2 in this document
 - Apprentices aged 16-18 or 19-24 with EHCP employed in a small business (see 7.4.3)
 - Those learners listed as 'fully funded' in the funding table at the end of this document
 - Other specified categories at the discretion of the Group (these are reviewed annually and are listed at appendix E)

6 Advanced Learner Loans

- 6.1 There will be no public funding of Level 3 and higher courses (non-apprenticeships) for those aged 19 and above at the start of their programme, with the exception of those aged 19-23 studying for their

first full Level 3 qualification (qualifications eligible as identified on LARS). Other students wishing to study L3 and higher courses may be eligible for Advanced Learner Loans.

- 6.2 Applications for Advanced Learner Loans must be made to the Student Loan Company (SLC) in advance of enrolment.
- 6.3 Learners not wishing to enter into a loan agreement will be liable for payment of the relevant course fee or any up-front fees not covered by loans pre-payable at the time of enrolment.
- 6.4 The maximum loan which will be awarded will be the lower of:
- The Group's stated fees
 - The published funding rate per the LARS
 - The amount requested by the learner
- 6.5 The minimum value of a loan is £300.
- 6.6 Fees funded by Loans are paid to the Group directly by the Student Loans Company. Payments are made on a monthly basis for each month when the learner is still active on their course on the first day of the calendar month. The value of the loan for which the learner becomes liable will increase with each monthly payment made to the Group. **It is therefore in the student's best interest to inform the Group of any change to their circumstances as early as possible.**
- 6.7 Similar arrangements apply for FE and HE loans, although payment frequency to the Group will differ

7 Further Education Provision

- 7.1 ESFA Subsidised Provision
- 7.1.1 Curriculum Heads wishing to charge fees that differ from the stated rate for any of their courses must obtain the prior written approval of the Principal or Director of Finance.
- 7.1.2 Where a home student is not eligible for funding on an ESFA course they will be charged tuition costs at the equivalent to the full ESFA funding rate.
- 7.2 Young People aged 16-18
- 7.2.1 In accordance with ESFA regulations, no compulsory tuition, registration or examination fees will normally be charged to learners aged 16-18 taking full or part time courses funded by the ESFA. However the Group may charge learners aged 16-18 for 'full cost' courses and for exam and re-sit charges if they do not achieve the required attendance levels or progress. Also, students will be charged where they are repeating a course previously failed (with the exception of English and maths).
- 7.2.2 Some materials fees, reflecting actual costs, may be charged.

7.3 Adult Learner (those aged 19 and above)

- 7.3.1 As a general principle, (excluding provision covered by Advanced Learner Loans) the default fee level will be 50% of the basic course fee.
- 7.3.2 It may be adjusted to reflect a rate based on the costs of delivery plus overheads or the rate suggested by market research, market demand and viability.

7.4 Apprenticeships (work based learning)

- 7.4.1 The funding system for apprentices changed significantly from 1st May 2017. From the 2017/2018 tax year, commencing 6th April 2017, a 0.5% levy was introduced against large employers (with pay bills in excess of £3 million) which then created a 'levy fund' for the employer to pay for apprenticeship training. For these apprentices and employers, the funds will transfer to training providers via the Apprenticeship Service (digital accounts). There may also be some incentives and/or additional elements directly funded by the ESFA and the possibility that some 'co-investment' (fees) will be required from the employer (10% of the required value) where levy funds have expired, or the training costs exceed the maximum price attached to the apprenticeship framework or standard.
- 7.4.2 Apprenticeships recruited from employers that do not pay the levy will be co-funded by the ESFA and the employer. This will be in the ratio of 90% funding from the ESFA and the remaining 10% will be collected from the employer. The 10% element is non-negotiable within the terms of the ESFA funding guidance for apprenticeships.
- 7.4.3 Individuals aged 16-18 at the start of their apprenticeship (or aged 19-24 with an EHCP or in care/care-leaver) employed in a small business of less than 50 employees will be 100% fully-funded by ESFA, and the employer will not be required to pay any fees.
- 7.4.4 The actual level of levy payments or ESFA funding, and fees required from the employer, will be determined from the 'funding band' attached to the framework or standard. Training providers may charge less than the maximum price attached to the band, which will reduce the funding/fees expected via the levy/ESFA and the employer. It is also permitted to agree a price with the employer which exceeds the maximum price, however, in these cases, the full excess will have to be paid directly by the employer. The Group will usually seek to charge the maximum fee attached to the framework or standard, to reflect its delivery costs.
- 7.4.5 Apprentices who started before 1st May 2017 are not subject to these arrangements.

8 Managing Agents and Partnership Agreement

- 8.1 This relates to fees paid to the Group by other organisations in receipt of ESFA funding, for education provided by the Group. Curriculum Heads are responsible for negotiating these fees with the recipient organisations in accordance with agreed protocols. Fees are to be approved by the Principal or Director of Finance and are to be reviewed annually.

- 8.2 Where courses are delivered by partners on behalf of the Group, the Group will agree with the partner whether the Group or the partner will collect fees and the two parties will account between each other for the fees collected.

9 School Pupils (plus 16-18 Sixth Forms / Other Colleges)

- 9.1 School pupils, of compulsory school age taking evening courses normally funded by the ESFA will be charged the full tuition fee.
- 9.2 The enrolment of school pupils under 16 requires the prior approval of the school, the parent/carer and the curriculum area.
- 9.3 When school pupils of compulsory school age wish to follow part of their programme at at a College within the Group, the Group will charge an agreed daily rate with the School. For elective home-educated students of compulsory school age, the Group is able to claim ESFA funding.
- 9.4 Specific School Provision (School Link) – Responsibility for negotiating the fee to be charged to the Local Authority or School rests with the Principal or Director of Finance.

10 International Students

- 10.1 International charges are contained in Appendix B. The fees charged will include the cost of the first attempt of any approved examination cost. Agreed additional learning support will be charged in excess of this fee.
- 10.2 All full-time international students must pay at least 50% of the fees before a formal offer can be made. The balance can then be paid on or before enrolment.
- 10.3 International learners taking English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) are charged on the basis of an hourly rate which excludes the cost of exam entry. (See Appendix C).
- 10.4 Where students fail to secure a visa, a deduction of £100 will be made to cover administration fees.

11 Full cost and enhanced fee courses

- 11.1 Fees for commercial courses or full cost recovery will be priced at a level to reflect the full price to the Group, with cognisance of the market.
- 11.2 Fees are based on the recovery of full costs including overheads and therefore will differ between courses. All commercial courses need to achieve the target financial contribution unless otherwise agreed by the Principal or Director of Finance.
- 11.3 There is a standard costing proforma and standard terms and conditions (both of which are available from the Finance Office), which are to be used for all commercial courses. There is no fee remission or concessionary fee for commercial courses. Group staff attending commercial courses will be required to pay the full fees or the full price will be charged to their home cost centre or the staff development budget with the approval from the relevant budget holder.

12 Higher Education Courses

- 12.1 In line with Government policy, the Group will be charging fees in accordance with any Access Agreement with OFFA. For continuing students the fees charged can be seen in the table at Appendix B.
- 12.2 For part-time courses, including re-sits, the tuition fee will be per module that the student undertakes according to the following rules:
- Students who plan to study a complete degree programme part-time pay the same total tuition fee as a full-time student.
 - The tuition fee should be charged equally across the planned number of years for Foundation Degrees.
 - Students enrolling for individual modules that are not part of a plan to complete a Foundation Degree in four years or less should pay the module price.
 - Students taking retake of modules in a subsequent year must pay a minimum rate of the module cost, where a module is not currently on offer the rate for a retake will be negotiated.
 - Students who wish to retake modules without attendance will be charged a fee of £150 per module.
 - Individual Module rates for new funded students are shown in the tables in Appendix B. These have been increased by the same percentage as full-time rates.
- 12.3 All HE fees could be subject to a CPI increase based on the preceding September's inflation rate, but any such increase will be capped so that no continuing student will pay more than those on the first year of the same course.

13 Fees waived and Financial Support

- 13.1 Only with the express permission of the Principal or Director of Finance should fees be waived (other than those categories identified in section 5.6). This approval should be gained before the student is enrolled in line with the fee waiver process.
- 13.2 Where the fee charged by the Group is considered not to be competitive with other providers and a reduction in the fee is considered necessary, agreement should be sought from the Principal or Director of Finance.
- 13.3 The Group also has funds available to support learners with financial need. This includes payment of some or all of the tuition and related course fees where assessed as appropriate. Eligibility criteria are determined annually. For further information, learners should consult the Financial Support Team or Student Services.

14 Payment of Fees

- 14.1 All fees become due in full at enrolment, but the Group recognises that some students may be unable to pay their fees in full at enrolment. The Group offers a payment plan of 3 monthly instalments for any course with a fee between £300 and £1,200; 6 monthly instalments for any course with a fee between £1,201 and £2,400; and 8 monthly instalments for any course with a fee over £2,400. For all

instalment plans the first payment will be taken at enrolment and at monthly intervals thereafter. All fees must be paid prior to the course end date, this will sometimes mean that the number of instalments may be reduced. Any default on the plan will result in any amounts outstanding becoming due immediately. Payment is by direct debit, unless agreed by exception. (Please see Instalment Plan Policy for further details).

- 14.2 Learners whose employers have agreed to pay their fees will be required to produce a letter/purchase order from their employer at the time of enrolment confirming that they will cover the full cost of the course.
- 14.3 In the case of international fees, 50% is payable in advance of the official letter being sent confirming that a place has been offered, with the balance being payable upon enrolment.
- 14.4 In the case of most two year courses the fees are payable over two years upon enrolment in each year.
- 14.5 In accordance with the Group's Financial Regulations, for any student who has not paid their fees in full at the end of the academic year:
- Assessed work may not be marked;
 - Withhold confirmed transcripts of marks and university certificates;
 - Refuse re-enrolment;
 - References for employment beyond confirmation of dates and courses attended may not be issued;
 - The student will not be permitted to progress to the next year of study or enrol on another course at the College; and
 - The debt will be pursued and may be referred to the debt collection agency for recovery.
- 14.6 Fees can be paid by any of the methods listed below:
- Cash
 - Cheque
 - Credit or Debit Card
 - Direct Debit
 - Direct bank transfer (against an invoice, quoting the reference number)
 - Purchase order and invoice
 - Student Loans Company

15 Examination Fees

- 15.1 Examination fees are set by the Awarding Organisations and collected by the Group at enrolment. All adult students not eligible for fee remission and those not eligible for any ESFA funding are normally charged the examination fees.
- 15.2 Awarding body fees are not charged to 16 to 18 year old learners whose tuition fees are remitted, provided the following criteria are met:
- It is the learner's first attempt (or first resit attempt) at the examination at the Centre;
 - The examination entry is supported by the relevant subject lecturer.

15.3 All learners retaking examinations will be entitled to a free first resit (where they had a free first attempt) but will be charged the examination retake fee which is payable prior to the examination entry for second and subsequent resit attempts. Any variations to this will need to be approved by the Principal or Director of Finance as per the fee waiver policy.

15.4 All learners in receipt of a free first attempt for an examination who do not take the examination without good reason may be charged the exam fee or re-scheduling fee.

15.5 **Absent from or Rescheduling on-line Tests**

If students are absent from an on-line test, without good reason, they will be required to pay to be entered for the test again or a re-scheduling fee (£10). Otherwise the programme area will be charged the relevant amount.

15.6 If students have been scheduled to sit an on-line test, and they request that the test be rescheduled, they may be required to pay for the test to be rescheduled. This will be the cost of the test, and if they are an external candidate, the external candidate fee will be chargeable.

15.7 **Confirmation of Past Results and/or Duplicate Certificates**

Anyone wishing to obtain a statement of past results who has not been enrolled with the College for the present or previous academic year, will be required to pay a fee of £20 to cover the administration costs involved.

Anyone wishing to obtain a duplicate certificate whereby the College has to apply on the student's behalf will be subject to a fee of £20 to cover the administration costs involved.

15.8 **External Candidate – Definition**

A student is classed as an external candidate once they are no longer enrolled on the course which the exam relates to, and have had one opportunity to resit (the resit should be taken at the first opportunity eg if they sit an exam in June and the resit is in December – they will not be classed as an external candidate for the December exam, but if they do not sit in December and wish to sit the following June, they will be classed as an external candidate). External candidates will need to pay the fees applicable at the time of the resit or before.

15.9 Similarly if a student wishes to sit an exam for which they are not enrolled – they may be able to sit the exam but will be subject to the external candidate fee. The external candidate fee is £65.

15.10 **Materials Fees**

Where a course has significantly increased costs for special or expensive items such as uniforms, equipment or consumables these costs will be passed on to learners (if not fully funded).

16 Withdrawals

16. Any student withdrawing from a course will be charged for the full cost of the course up to the end of the academic term in which the learner last attended. Any payments already received from the Student,

Employer or Student Loan Company will be deducted in arriving at the balance due. For HE courses, students will be charged as follows;

- Withdrawing after starting term 1 – 25% of the annual fee
- Withdrawing after starting term 2 – 50% of the annual fee
- Withdrawing after starting term 3 – 100% of the annual fee

16.2 In exceptional circumstances there will be no fees charged where:

- The learner withdraws within the Start Period of 14 days from the commencement of the course;
- An application for no charge has been authorised by the Principal or Director of Finance.

16.3 Fees will be charged up to the date of withdrawal where:

- The learner withdraws on medical grounds and appropriate evidence (e.g. Doctor's letter) is received by the Finance department to verify this.
- An application or reduced charge has been authorised by the Principal or Director of Finance.

16.4 Where a learner has been requested to leave by the Group for reasons of non-attendance, non-completion of course work or similar the fees will be charged for the full academic year and the amount due calculated based on amounts already received.

16.5 Where a learner has been invoiced for a period of greater than one year and they have withdrawn within year one, the later years will be credited in full and not taken into account when calculating the outstanding balance due.

16.6 Invoices raised for a learner who has withdrawn from their course will become due for payment immediately. An instalment plan may be agreed in accordance with 14.1 above.

17 Refunds

17.1 Refunds of fees will only be approved in the cases where an application for a refund or credit has been made in writing to the Principal or Director of Finance.

17.2 If a course is cancelled by the Group refunds will be offered.

17.3 If a learner has paid their fees and is successful in obtaining a loan via the Student Loan Company a full refund will be made to the learner.