



# Richmond upon Thames College

## Fee Policy

### 2021-22

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## **1. Background**

- 1.1. This Policy sets out the requirements for the charging of fees and the rationale behind the College's fee structure.
- 1.2. Fees in most cases are subject to government guidelines, via the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), Greater London Authority (GLA) and the Office for Students (OfS) which provide the statutory framework in which the fees are decided for Home or EU learners.
- 1.3. The Fee Policy is supplemented by detailed procedures and guidance (together 'the Guidance') which is updated annually to reflect the changing requirements from the funding bodies, including rates, eligibility for fee waivers etc.
- 1.4. The Fee Policy, together with the Guidance, is designed to provide clear criteria for course charges and to avoid ambiguity and inconsistency.

## **2. Scope**

- 2.1. The Fee Policy encompasses all fees and charges associated with courses offered by Richmond upon Thames College including those for:
  - 16-18 year olds
  - 19+ year olds
  - 24+ on level 3 or higher programmes
  - Employers
  - International learners
  - Learners on commercial courses
  - Higher Education learners
- 2.2. All fees are charged on an annual basis and reviewed annually unless otherwise stated.

## **3. Intent**

- 3.1. The intent of the Fee Policy is to ensure that the method of calculation of all fees charged to learners and employers is fair and transparent.
- 3.2. The Fee Policy is designed to explain the procedures for setting fees and for deciding on the level of fees.
- 3.3. Learners should be aware from the Policy of how to claim a refund and appeal against refund decisions.
- 3.4. The over-riding principle is that learners should pay fees in accordance with the ESFA, GLA and OfS policies.

## **4. Payment of Fees**

### **4.1. Payment of Fees – General**

- 4.1.1 All learners are expected to pay, or make arrangements for an Advanced Learner Loan or Student Loan, to pay their fees in full at or before enrolment, or in line with specific course conditions. Subject to course criteria the college will allow payment by instalments.
- 4.1.2 Fees are payable on or before enrolment or, for courses running over more than one year, at the start of each academic year.
- 4.1.3 Enrolments which take place close to the start of term may cause difficulty in obtaining payment prior to the start of term. In such circumstances, payment should be made within two weeks of the start of term.
- 4.1.4 Some students may be eligible for full grant funding, or for bursary support towards their studies. Please refer to Annex 2 for further guidance.

### **4.2. Advanced Learner Loans – Further Education**

- 4.2.2 The ESFA and/or GLA sets out the circumstances and extent to which an adult learner's

programme will not be funded. To the extent not funded, the learner may either pay the fee due in accordance with this policy and the guidance, or take out an Advanced Learner Loan from the Student Loan Company (SLC) to fund their course.

- 4.2.3 At enrolment if a learner can demonstrate that they have applied for an Advanced Learner Loan prior to enrolment and either that their application has been approved or that it is awaiting approval, no further upfront tuition fee is payable.

### **4.3 Student Loans – Higher Education**

- 4.3.1 The College is registered with OfS and is therefore in receipt of grant funding from OfS for Higher Education courses approved by the OfS. This also means that learners enrolled on these courses are able to access a tuition fee loan from the Student Loan Company (a Student Loan).

### **4.4 Advanced Learner Loan and Student Loan learners**

- 4.4.1 The learner will be required to pay the full fee **immediately**, unless payment by instalments is agreed if:

- there is no application for an Advanced Learner Loan or Student Loan; or
- approval is not received within 2 weeks of the first day of learning; or
- the loan is subsequently cancelled or withdrawn for any reason.

- 4.4.2 For the avoidance of doubt, if the learner does not comply with 4.4.1, the learner will be withdrawn immediately.

- 4.4.3 If as a result of 4.4.1, the learner is required to pay the full fee immediately, but subsequently a loan is approved, the College will refund the fees paid up to the amount of the loan approved.

- 4.4.4 If a learner withdraws from a course after the second week of a full-time course or the second class of part-time course, the learner will be required to pay until the end of term of the date of withdrawal, this could mean the difference between fee due and the amount paid by way of the loan.

- 4.4.5 The implications of clauses 4.4.1 to 4.4.4 will have been explained through the relevant loans letter.

### **4.5 Commercial (Full cost courses)**

- 4.5.1 Learners on full cost courses are expected to pay the course fees in full, there will be no fee remission or discounts.

### **4.6 Payment by Instalment**

- 4.6.1 The College offers instalments plans for Home and EU learners. The operation of these is set out in the Guidance.

- 4.6.2 For the avoidance of doubt:

- If the learner withdraws from their course they will remain liable for any outstanding balance of fees;
- If the learner defaults on any instalment, the balance of the outstanding fee is payable in full immediately;
- If the learner defaults on any instalment, they may not be entitled to pay fees for future courses by instalment.
- If a learner defaults on any instalment due, they will be subject to an additional £30 college administration fee, plus an additional 10% of the full outstanding balance for each payment default.

### **4.7 International Learners**

- 4.7.1 For International Learners, the Guidance sets out the requirements for paying for a

course, including deposits, timing of payment and instalment plans.

## **5. Basis of fees**

- 5.1 Courses funded by the ESFA, GLA and OfS will be charged in accordance with the Funding Guidelines given in the current specifications for Further Education Colleges.
- 5.2 Tuition fees will not be charged to learners aged 16-18 in full-time or part-time education funded through the ESFA. For the purposes of the ESFA Funding Guidance '18' means under 19 on 31 August in the calendar year when the learner commences a programme of study. Certain categories of learners aged 19 and over are also exempt from tuition fees, provided the exemption meets the ESFA funding rules.
- 5.3 The maximum tuition fee payable for ESFA and GLA devolved funded provision will be as stipulated by the relevant funding body.
- 5.4 The maximum amount for an Advanced Learner Loan will be determined by the funding value as set out in the ESFA Funding Guidance and related documentation.
- 5.5 The maximum for an HE course will be the maximum permitted by OfS before approval from the Office for Fair Access is required.
- 5.6 The College may vary fees below the maximum levels set out below to reflect market conditions, competition and other factors.
- 5.7 The elements making up the fees payable and who has to pay are set out in the Guidance.

## **6. Fee Refunds and Cancellations**

- 6.1 The College will only refund fees in exceptional circumstances, details of which are set out in the Guidance.
- 6.2 To receive a refund of fees, learners must put a request in writing by completing a request for refund of course fees form.

## **7. Sanctions**

- 7.1 The College will follow a strict credit control policy to seek recovery of fees due, including contacting the learner by email, telephone or in person to secure settlement.
- 7.2 In the event that a learner fails to pay the fees due after such follow up, the College will apply the following sanctions:
  - withdraw a learner's IT and library access;
  - suspend access to the College;
  - prevent progression to the next year/session;
  - exclude the learner from the College;
  - exclude from access to work placements.
- 7.3 In addition, the College may refer the debt to a third-party agency for collection.

## **Annex 1: Fee Policy Guidance Notes**

Richmond upon Thames College Fee policy confirms that all fees are due at the time of enrolment, however there are a number of exceptions to this rule. In exceptional circumstances, learners may pay fees using one of the available instalment plans. On appropriate courses, learners may also fund their studies with either an Advanced Learner Loan or Higher Education Student Loan from the Student Loans Company.

### **Registration, Material Charges and Deposits**

- Some courses attract registration, material charges and/or deposits, students will be made aware when they apply, these charges are payable at enrolment.

### **Instalment Plans**

- Instalment plans are only available on eligible courses.
- Instalment plans are not available where the fees total less than £300 and less than 12 weeks duration.
- Learners must pay a deposit at the time of enrolment of at least 25%
- If a learner withdraws from a course, the balance of any unpaid fees are then payable in full.

### **Advanced Learner Loans**

- Advanced Learner Loans are available to fund most level 3 and above courses.
- All learners aged 24 and over have the option to fund fees with an Advanced Learner Loan (subject to eligibility).
- Learners aged between 19 and 23 who already hold a full level 3 qualification may choose to fund their studies with an Advanced Learner Loan (subject to eligibility).
- Loans must be fully approved by the second week of study. Learners with no approved loan after this date will be asked to pay the fees in full or to set up an instalment plan. If a loan is subsequently approved and paid to Richmond upon Thames College, then any fees paid by the learner will be refunded up to the amount of the loan subsequently received.
- If a learner withdraws from a course, the balance of any unpaid fees is then payable in full.
- Learners taking out an Advanced Learner Loan are not required to pay exam fees.

### **Higher Education Loans**

- Higher Education Student Loans are available for most Higher Education Courses.
- Loans must be fully approved by the end of the second week of study. Learners with no approved loan after this date will be asked to pay the fees in full or to set up an instalment plan.
- If a loan is subsequently approved and paid to Richmond upon Thames College then any fees paid by the learner will be refunded up to the amount of the loan subsequently received.
- Where the course fees are not paid, or the loan not approved, then the learner shall be withdrawn from the course. This includes where a student defaults on an instalment.
- Where a learner withdraws after the 14-day cancellation period ends and is paying via monthly instalments, no refund of fees paid will be made but no further tuition fees will

be charged.

- Where a learner pays annual tuition fees in advance and withdraws from the course then the learner will receive a refund for the remaining months of the course on a pro-rata basis.
- Where the fees are paid for by a loan from the Student Loans Company (SLC), the College will inform the SLC that the learner has withdrawn from their course and claim no further funding. Once instalments have been paid by the SLC they are non-refundable.
- Learners taking out a Student Loan are not required to pay exam fees.

### **Employer to Pay**

- Where a learner has an employer or sponsor who has agreed to pay fees upon receipt of an invoice, the learner must produce a letter from their Employer/Sponsor requesting that they be invoiced for the value of the fees. The letter must contain the following information:
  - The letter must be on official company headed paper;
  - Includes the full name of the learner;
  - The value that they require to be invoiced;
  - Include a purchase order number and the words 'Please invoice';
  - Must be the original document;
  - Must be signed by an authorised officer;
  - The learner will be required to pay any difference between the invoice value and the value of the fees due;
  - Richmond upon Thames College will take all reasonable steps to invoice and follow up on invoice payments, however if an invoice remains unpaid, the learner will be required to pay any outstanding fees due in full;
  - If a learner withdraws from a course, the balance of any unpaid fees are then payable in full.

### **Examination, Resit and Re-mark Fees**

- Examination fees are not charged separately, they are incorporated with the tuition fee charged by the college.
- A resit fee may be charged where the student fails without good reason to sit the examination for which the College has paid
- Where a learner requests to be entered for a resit examination the learner will be liable for the cost of the resit entry plus a £30 administration fee.
- English and Maths resits, for the purpose of achieving a grade 4-9 where this has not previously been achieved, are excluded from the resit fees.
- Where a learner requests a re-mark of examination script the learner will be liable for the cost of the remark fee plus a £5 administration fee.
- Where learners request a replacement certificate to be ordered by the centre, the learner will be liable for the cost of replacement plus a £30 administration fee.

### **International Students**

- Full international fees for all courses to be paid by learners who are not eligible to be funded by the ESFA, there are no reductions or fee discounts.
- A 10% non-refundable deposit is payable to secure a place at the college
- All fees must be paid before the course start date.

**Refunds (applies to all except for OfS funded courses)**

- Refunds are only payable where the college is at fault (for example where a course is closed).
- If a learner withdraws from a course, whether this is directly or through unauthorised non-attendance no refund of payments already made will be authorised and any outstanding fee balance becomes due.
- All refunds must be claimed using the correct refund claim form and authorised by an, appropriate, authorised member of staff.
- If a refund request is made as a result of alleged poor teaching and or against the conduct of a teacher, the college will first and foremost carry out a detailed investigation in order to substantiate if a refund is due.

**First Full Level 2 and 3 Entitlement**

- Fees may be remitted for learners aged between 19 and 23 if they have not previously gained a full Level 2 or 3 qualification.
- Not all qualifications are eligible for Level 2 and Level 3 entitlement.
- Learners who are not eligible for a Level 2 or Level 3 entitlement must pay any fees chargeable for their course. Advanced Learner Loans are available for most Level 3 courses for learners aged 19+.
- The college will be advised of and check if any learners who claim a first full level 2 or 3 entitlement but already hold a full level 2 or 3 qualification. Any learners identified will be required to make full payment for any outstanding fees.

**Low Income Threshold**

- Employed learners on an individual income of less than £20,962 a year for those with a home postcode in the GLA devolved area, and £16,009 a year for those outside London, may be eligible for full funding on courses up to level 2.
- Evidence of income dated within the prior three months will be required.

## Annex 2: Contribution Table

Provision	19- to 23-year-olds	24+ unemployed	24+ other
English and maths, up to and including level 2 <sup>n</sup>  (Must be delivered as part of the legal entitlement)	Fully funded*	Fully funded*	Fully funded*
Level 2 (excluding English and maths)  (First full level 2 must be delivered as part of the legal entitlement)	Fully funded* (first and full)	Fully Funded	Co-funded+
Learning to progress to level 2	Fully funded^ (up to and including level 1)	Fully funded	Co-funded+
Level 3  (First full level 3 must be delivered as part of the legal entitlement)	Fully funded* (first and full)	Loan-funded	Loan-funded
	Loan-funded** (previously achieved full level 3 or above)		
English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) learning up to and including level 2	Co-funded+	Fully funded	Co-funded+
	Fully funded - unemployed		
Learning aims up to and including level 2, where the learner has already achieved a first full level 2 or above	Co-funded+	Fully funded	Co-funded+
	Fully funded - unemployed		
Learning aims up to and including level 2, where the learner has not achieved a first full level 2, or above	N/A	Fully funded	Co-funded+
British Sign Language (BSL), up to and including level 2 where the learner's preferred language is BSL***	Fully funded	Fully funded	Fully funded
Eligible learning aims which support the upskilling of teaching or learning support staff to deliver improved specialist provision for learners with SEND	Fully funded	N/A	Fully funded
<sup>n</sup> GLA will introduce a funding uplift for English and maths			
*Must be delivered as one of the English and maths, and/or first full level 2 or first full level 3 qualifications required as part of the legal entitlements.			
^Must be delivered as entry or level one provision from local flexibility.			
** Availability of loans at level 3 does not replace the legal entitlement to full funding for learners aged 19 to 23 undertaking their first full level 3.			
+ Low Wage flexibility may apply,			