

TUITION AND REFUND OF TUITION FEE POLICY 2020/21 (Excluding Apprenticeships)

1. Introduction

The College expects all learners aged 19 or over (excluding ESOL) who are not fee remitted (see section ii) to make a contribution to their cost of learning. This policy is consistent with Government Policy and is the practice in all Further Education institutions.

The policy covers the College approach to:

- (i) the pricing structure for calculating course fees payable by learners and their sponsors
- (ii) remission of tuition fees and Adult Support Fund
- (iii) examination registration and other fees
- (iv) methods of payment
- (v) refund of fees

(i) Course Fees

This section deals with the pricing structure for the setting of course fees. Market factors will be taken into account when fee structures are determined and consequently it is accepted that the approved policy may be adjusted to recognise these market forces. Variations will be determined by the Deputy Principal.

Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) funded provision

The Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) Draft Funding & Performance Management Rules 2020 to 2021 states that where the learner is co-funded then either the learner or their employer will need to make a contribution towards the costs of learning to add to the GMCA's contribution. The 'assumed contribution' for 2020/21 is 50% of the un-weighted Adult Rate.

Advanced Learner Loans

The Education & Skills Funding Agency Advanced Learner Loans Funding Rules 2020 to 2021 requires a 'loan' fee figure will be charged to learners aged 19-23 on level 3 to 6 courses who already have a FL3 qualification and aged 24+ on level 3 to 6 courses (excluding apprenticeships) because the college will no longer receive any grant funding for these groups of learners. It should be recognised that taking a loan is not compulsory and this fee may be paid by the learner/employer, or there could be a combination of part-loan and other contributions. In order to make the amount payable as clear as possible tuition fees will be expressed as a single amount that includes examination/registration costs.

It is expected that the tuition fees set for learners aged 19+ who already have a FL3 qualification on level 3 and above courses are aligned to the Education & Skills Funding Agency fully-funded rates for 2020/21, or the market rate – whichever is the higher.

More detail can be found here:

Full Time and Part Time Adults on Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) Funded Courses.

The tuition fee for adults on funded courses will be aligned to the Education & Skills Funding Agency co-funded rates for 2020/21. The co-funded rate is 50% of the fully funded rate. Examination/registration fees are added to this amount and expressed as a single tuition fee to the learner, to make it as clear as possible.

More details on funding eligibility are contained in the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) Draft Funding & Performance Management Rules 2020 to 2021.

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Full cost recovery tuition fees.

Full cost recovery courses need to be appropriately costed taking into account teaching and support costs, accreditation costs, premises costs, overhead costs and an appropriate margin.

Higher Education Fees (HE)

For HE students who start in 2020/21 fees are as follows:

- Full Time £5,995 per academic year
- Other courses fee is in proportion to FTE, so a 0.5 FTE PT course would have a fee of £2,978.
- Where DBS charges are payable students will be re-charged the fee for an online application.
- Where there is a requirement for uniforms, students will be expected to order and pay for these directly with the supplier.

(ii) Remission of Tuition Fees

The Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) require colleges to remit fees in a number of cases. The College's fees policy adopts these requirements which are summarised below. No learner will be charged tuition fees for funded courses if they are:

- 16-18 year olds or 19-24 year olds with an EHCP in either full time or part time education. Such learners will continue to receive free tuition in any consecutive subsequent year of study of the same qualification.
- All learners studying an Entry or Level 1 programme, who do not have a Level 2 qualification and need Entry/Level 1 to progress to Level 2.
- All learners studying a first full level 2 programme (as defined in the Funding Rules) who do not already hold a full level 2 qualification
- Learners aged 19 to 23 on a full level 3 programme (as defined in the Funding Rules) who do not already hold a full level 3 qualification
- Unemployed (as defined by the GMCA) learners actively seeking work (self-declared) and in receipt of the following benefits: Job Seekers Allowance, Employment Support Allowance or Universal Credit. For universal credit, learners earned income from employment (disregarding benefits) must be less than £338 a month (learner is sole adult in their benefit claim) or £541 a month (learner has a joint claim with their partner).

This excludes learners aged 19 to 23 on level 3 who already have a FL3 qualification and aged 24+ on level 3 to 6 courses

- Other learners (as defined by the GMCA) who receive other state benefits not listed above and their earned income from employment (disregarding benefits) is less than £338 a month (learner is sole adult in their benefit claim) or £541 a month (learner has a joint claim with their partner)

and

want to be employed into more sustainable employment and their earned income from employment (disregarding benefits) is less than £338 a month (learner is sole adult in their benefit claim) or £541 a month (learner has a joint claim with their partner) and the college is satisfied the learning is directly relevant to their employment prospects and the local labour market needs

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This excludes learners aged 19-23 on level 3 to 6 courses who already have a FL3 qualification and aged 24+ on level 3 to 6 courses

- Learners in receipt of low wage, earning less than £18,135 annual gross salary.
- Learners aged 19 and over, excluding apprentices, are eligible for full funding to take GCSE English and maths if they do not currently have these qualifications at grades A* to C or grade 4 or higher, no matter what other qualifications they already hold. If a learner needs to 'retake' their GCSE English and maths because they did not achieve an A* to C or grade 4 or higher, the learner must not just resit the examination, but also carry out the necessary learning.

In all cases appropriate documentary evidence must be made available to the College.

Remission of fees are only awarded to students on government funded courses and do not apply for full cost courses (FCR). Evidence of hardship must be provided.

(iii) Examination and registration will be included within the single tuition fee, except in the following circumstances:

The College **will charge for all examination re-sits** according to Awarding Body cost and in consultation with subject tutors as follows:

- where an acceptable level of completion of work has not been reached;
- where the learner fails, without good reason, to sit the examination for which the College has paid;
- where the learner is re-taking an examination resulting from either an initial failure or with the aim of achieving a marginally higher grade.

The College will accept illness, as certified by a medical practitioner, as a valid reason for absence.

(iv) Equipment and Clothing

The College will charge for equipment, special clothing and/or materials. However, where such clothing or equipment is necessary for a learner's health and safety, and the learner is aged 16-18 years or is entitled to full remission of fees, a charge will only be made if the learner retains such clothing or equipment. If the learner does not wish to retain clothing or equipment required for health and safety reasons, the learner may borrow the clothing or equipment free of charge.

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(v) Methods of Payment

Payment will be accepted by cheque or credit/debit card/direct debit.

Learners who are required to pay tuition fees and/or other costs can elect to pay by instalments if the cost of the course is £200 or more (without exception). **A deposit on enrolment** plus no more than 5 instalments as per the table below are to be accepted and instalments must be payable by direct debit (except in exceptional cases where the Executive Director of Finance and Estates agrees to an alternative method). All instalments must be paid 6 weeks before the end of the course.

The exception to this is where courses are less than 12 weeks, where the full fee is payable up front.

Tuition Fee Instalment Table

Course Fee	Deposit at enrolment	Number of further instalments
£200 - £500	Yes	2
Over £500	Yes	5

If a learner defaults on an instalment, the full outstanding amount becomes payable.

An administration charge of £20 for issue of an invoice will be applied to the fee where a learner elects to pay by instalments without setting up a direct debit mandate in favour of the College. The administration charge will apply to each course fee (i.e. not to each invoice).

All course cancellations must be reported to the Executive Director of Finance and Estates in order that appropriate action can be taken.

If an employer or sponsor is to pay tuition or other fees, the employer or sponsor will be invoiced for the full amount. The student will be required to provide evidence of the employer’s agreement to pay the tuition and/or other fees at enrolment (e.g. written confirmation on employer’s headed paper).

A receipt will be issued for all fee payments except those paid by direct debit or those fees paid by employers.

The College reserves the right to refer any unpaid fees to an external debt recovery agent for collection.

(vi) Refund of fees

- If for any reason the College has to cancel or discontinue a course a full refund of fees will be made. In these circumstances no deduction will be made to cover administration or other costs incurred.
- For courses which run over a full academic year, if a learner withdraws **within the first three weeks** of a course the College will make a pro rata refund of fees, based on attendance, after deducting an administration charge of £20. Requests for refunds in respect of courses which run for less than an academic year will be considered on an individual basis. In all cases, where the College has incurred specific costs in respect of the learner (e.g. exam fees, kit) these costs will be deducted from any refund of fees to the learner.
- Refunds will not be given after three weeks of the start of a course.

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- Where a learner has opted to pay by instalments any refund due will be calculated on the full course fee and the instalments adjusted accordingly. If no refund is due under this policy the learner will be expected to continue to honour the agreed payment plan.
- All refund applications must be approved and signed by the appropriate Head of Department and by a member of the College's Senior Leadership Team.
- All refund applications must be submitted with a receipt as evidence of payment of course fees.
- Exceptionally, individual circumstances may be considered outside these regulations. Where a fee refund is proposed which is outside the regulations, the fee refund form must be countersigned by the Executive Director of Finance & Estates or a member of the Executive Team.

(vi) **Online Enrolments Refund Policy**

If you enrol online, under the United Kingdom's Distance Selling Regulations you have the right to cancel your enrolment and request a full refund within 14 working days. Cancellation of your enrolment must be made in writing quoting your details and course code within 14 working days of the date of confirmation that your payment has been processed to finance@tameside.ac.uk Refunds to credit/debit cards usually take 3 to 5 working days.

***For learners aged 19 and over, the calculation of their age for fee remission purposes is based on their actual age on the date they start their programme rather than the 31st August, however the calculation of age to determine if a learner is aged 16-18 or 19+ (referred to within this document as "Adult" is based on the learners age on the 31st August of the academic year i.e. for 2020/21 academic year this is the age on 31st August 2020.**

Documents:

The Greater Manchester Draft Funding & Performance Management Rules 2020 to 2021.

The Education & Skills Funding Agency Advanced Learner Loans Funding Rules 2020 to 2021

The Education & Skills Funding Agency Funding Guidance For Young People 2020 to 2021

Age is based on start date, NOT on 31 August (unless a learner is 18 on 31st August)

2020/2021	Unemployed and on means tested benefits or employed** on low wage* All 19+	19-23 employed	24+ employed
Basic Skills English & Maths (excl. GCSEs)	No fees to pay		
English Language and Maths GCSE (including ESOL English units)	No fees to pay without GCSE grade 9-4 (A*-C)		
ESOL	No fees to pay	Learner to pay tuition fees	Learner to pay tuition fees
Entry and Level 1 (learning to progress to L2)	No fees to pay	No fees to pay	No fees to pay
First Full Level 2	No fees to pay	No fees to pay	No fees to pay
Entry, L1 or L2, where the learner already has a full L2 or above	No fees to pay (need permission from GMCA for second FL2 if on low wage)	Learner to pay tuition fees	Learner to pay tuition fees
L2 (not FL2), where the learner does not already have Full L2 or above.	<u>19-23 Learner to pay full cost fees</u> 24+ No fees to pay	<u>Learner to pay full cost fees</u>	Learner to pay tuition fees

Age is based on start date, NOT on 31 August (unless a learner is 18 on 31st August)

2020/2021	Unemployed and on means tested benefits or employed** on low wage* All 19+	19-23 employed	24+ employed
Full Level 3	No fees to pay (If First Full Level 3 and aged 19-23) Otherwise Advanced Learner Loan funded	No fees to pay (If First Full Level 3) Otherwise Advanced Learner Loan funded	Loan Funded
	Loan Funded (If learner already has Full Level 3 and aged 19-23)	Loan Funded (If learner already has Full Level 3)	
Level 3 (not FL3)	Loan Funded	Loan Funded	Loan Funded
Level 3 units (not FL3) up to 14 credits	No fees to pay	<u>Learner to pay full cost fees</u>	<u>Learner to pay full cost fees</u>
Level 4 or above	Loan Funded	Loan funded	Loan Funded

If a learner has left the British Armed Forces after completing four or more years of service or who has been medically discharged due to an injury in active service, after completing basic training. Do not enrol, refer to MIS.

***Low wage flexibility for Employed learners**

Age 19-23

If you earn less than £18,135 annual gross salary, and wish to study a course at entry level, level 1 or full level 2, then your course fees will be waived, for eligible courses.

Age 24+

If you earn less than £18,135 annual gross salary, and wish to study a course up to full level 2, then your course fees will be waived, for eligible courses.

Evidence of gross salary in the form of a payslip dated in the last 3 months is required.

****EMPLOYED**

- other learners (as defined by the GMCA) who receive other state benefits not listed above and their earned income from employment (disregarding benefits) is less than £338 a month (learner is sole adult in their benefit claim) or £541 a month (learner has a joint claim with their partner) and
want to be employed into more sustainable employment and their earned income from employment (disregarding benefits) is less than £338 a month (learner is sole adult in their benefit claim) or £541 a month (learner has a joint claim with their partner) and the college is satisfied the learning is directly relevant to their employment prospects and the local labour market needs

This excludes learners aged 19-23 on level 3 to 6 courses who already have a FL3 qualification and aged 24+ on level 3 to 6 courses.

TUITION AND REFUND OF TUITION FEE POLICY 2018/19 (Excluding Apprenticeships)

2. POLICY CONTEXT

This policy applies to all Learners excluding Apprenticeships.

3. LOCATION AND ACCESS TO THE POLICY

The Tuition and Refund of Tuition Fee Policy 2020/21 and supporting policies and other documents are available via SharePoint on the college network and the college website.

4. POLICY STATUS

Responsibility: Executive Director of Finance & Estates
 Approved by: Corporation/Finance & Resources Committee
 Issue Date: June 2017
 Last Review Date: June 2020
 Next Review Date: June 2021

Review/Change History:

Version	Description/Detail of Update & Name of Person who has carried out Update	Approval	Date of Issue
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HE fees - DBS Charges – specific amount removed • GMCA Low Wage Threshold changed from £17,550 to £18,135 • Methods of payment – ‘cash’ removed as an option. Card payments only in light of COVID-19 • Refunds – signatory required if a refund falls outside of the regulations changed from Deputy Principal to a member of the executive team. Updated by Vicky Hayhoe	SLT	June 2020