

## **South Bank Colleges Student Fee Policy**

The College will set the fees payable by its students to promote the widest possible participation in learning amongst the communities which it serves, in accordance with the requirements of the relevant funding and regulatory bodies. In doing so the College will set fees at levels which also ensure the financial viability of its learning provision.

### **Scope of Policy**

This policy covers all fees payable by students in relation to provision delivered by the College, specifically:

- Tuition Fees
- Examination and Registration Fees
- Materials Fees
- Trips Fees

### **General Principles**

The College will seek at all times to clearly publish accurate and timely information about its fees.

The College will aim to maintain published fee levels wherever possible but reserves the right in exceptional circumstances to change fees and other charges without prior notice.

The College will implement and maintain procedures which ensures the accurate assessment of fees due and to ensure that the fees policy is applied fairly and consistently across all courses and programme areas.

Individual students (and/or their sponsors) are responsible for ensuring the prompt payment of all fees due and for the timely and accurate provision of all information required to enable the accurate assessment and prompt collection of fees.

The College may reduce or waive its fees in cases of financial hardship. The circumstances in which these apply are set out in the Bursary Policy.

The College reserves the right to correct administrative errors that may occur during the registration process, including the applicable fee or loan value. The College will act reasonably in the application of any such correction and if significant, the student shall have the option to withdraw and receive a full refund of fees paid.

### **Tuition Fees**

Fees are due in full on enrolment and by enrolling the student is committing to pay the whole fee irrespective of whether they attend for the whole of the course in question or any part of it. As a general rule, all tuition fees due must be paid to the College in full prior to the commencement of the

course to which the fees relate.

The relevant funding agency (e.g. Education and Skills Funding Agency, Greater London Assembly, Office for Students) publishes rules outlining the criteria in which students are eligible to attract full or partial funding for their course fees. These rules may change from time to time. Should the funding agency rules conflict with any part of this policy, the funding agency rules will take precedence.

Students who are not eligible for funding will be charged the full cost of the provision as determined by the Corporation and as published in the College's Careers Guide or on the College's website. This also applies to courses which do not attract grant funding.

Tuition fees for Higher Education courses delivered by the College are set in partnership with the relevant University. Fees are payable to the relevant University and they should be contacted for further details.

Separate funding arrangements exist where students are attending College provision in partnership with schools and other agencies. These contractual arrangements are overseen by the College Leadership Group.

## **Examination/Awarding Body and College Registration Fees**

Where a student is eligible for grant funding for their tuition fees, they will not be required to pay examination and college registration fees; these costs being included within the grant funding. Exam fees may be charged in the following circumstances where:

- the student is re-sitting an exam which has previously been taken and failed,
- attendance and/or coursework fails to meet the levels set by the College as determined by the College Leadership Group,
- the exam is being retaken with the intention of improving their grade or
- re-marking of a public examination is at the student's request.

The decision to charge these fees will be undertaken by the College Leadership Group (or a duly authorised representative), while taking into account medical and other potential mitigating circumstances.

If a student is not eligible for grant funding, then in addition to tuition fees, they will also be liable for examination and registration fees. The amount of these will be set with reference to the charges made to the College by the relevant examining body.

In addition, the College will charge a fee, payable in advance, for:

- the provision of replacement certificates
- provision of a statement of results for former students.

## **Materials Fees**

Materials fees are charged in accordance with the rules of the relevant funding agency and may be in respect of items such as clothing, equipment or consumables which are either necessary for health and safety or items which students can take away from the learning environment.

In addition, the College may require any student who is over 19 years of age at the date of enrolment onto their course and who is required to pay tuition fees:

- To contribute towards the cost of materials for the course onto which they have enrolled
- To purchase uniform or equipment as prescribed by the College prior to enrolment

Students who are either under 19 years of age, or who are over 19 years of age but enrolled onto further education provision which is fully grant funded:

- Can obtain prescribed materials, uniform or equipment required for their course by paying a refundable deposit equivalent to its value.
- This deposit will be repaid by the College when the student returns the materials, uniform and / or equipment in a good (i.e. reusable) condition having completed their course, and with actual attendance exceeding 85%.
- The College Leadership Group (or a duly authorised representative) may exercise discretion in relation to this in exceptional circumstances.
- Learner Support and Hardship Funds will be made available where possible to support students who are assessed to be in financial hardship and unable to pay any deposit.
- With regard to textbooks, the college has arrangements in place to enable students to purchase their own copy at a cost which is below the recommended retail price should the student wish to annotate the textbook in any way.

Every effort will be made to ensure that the charge to the student matches the cost to the College of purchasing the materials, uniform and equipment, and that the amounts payable will be advised to students prior to, or at, enrolment.

## **Trip Fees**

The College reserves the right to charge students in full for the cost of a trip or other visit or event.

Every effort will be made to ensure that the charge to the student matches the cost to the College of the trip / visit / event, and that the approximate amount payable will be advised to students prior to, or at, enrolment.

For fully grant-funded students, charges will only be rendered for trips where the Principal considers that attendance on that trip / visit / event is not essential to obtain the relevant qualification. Any trips/visit/events which are required to enable the student to complete their course/qualification are covered by the grant funding the College receives.

# STUDENT FEES PROCEDURES

The College will ensure that:

- Fees are payable for a programme/qualification and will not be unduly varied (e.g. for variations in the length of the delivery of the programme)
- Fees are correctly set up for all courses on the student records system
- Fees are readily available and easily accessible for all current and prospective students, including information on any financial assistance which might be available (including Advanced Learner Loans)
- Clear information is provided to all students regarding the fee policy, fee concessions and entitlement to refunds
- Staff enrolling students onto the system are fully trained and briefed to ensure that they fully understand the process and implications of entering data into various fields
- The College has a refund policy that sets out clearly the circumstances under which refunds will be made.

## Operational Outcomes

On enrolment, students are clear about the fees they are expected to pay, and understand what options are available for financial assistance as required. The College is paid in a timely manner for the fees due and courses are thus financially sustainable.

## Supplementary Documentation

- Refund Guidance Notes (Appendix 1)
- Fee Information (available in full time and part time prospectus)

## Appendix 1

### Guidance notes on application for refund or adjustment of course fees – this policy applies to all the programmes run by the College.

- Written application must be made for either refund of course fees paid or adjustment to course fee due
- Application forms are available from any of the College's Student Centres
- Applications must be received by the College within 4 weeks of last date of attendance
- The College will endeavour to process refunds within 20 working days of receipt of application, with the exception of reason 6 below

### Refunds and/or adjustment will be made as follows:

	When	Refund/Adjustment	Application Required
1	Course or class fails to start	All fees	<b>NO</b> - In this situation we do not expect an application to be made. We will ensure full fees are refunded back to debit/ credit card
2	College closure <b>Or</b> Significant course amendment such as duration of course or change of day/time	All fees for college closure <b>or</b> Pro-rata refund for reduced duration of course	<b>NO</b> - In this situation we do not expect an application to be made. We will ensure full fees are refunded back to debit/credit card or a cheque is posted
3	Student withdraws 14 days or more before the start of the course	All fees, subject to an administration charge beingdeducted from the refund	<b>Yes</b>
4	Student withdraws for medical reasons	Pro-rata tuition fees	<b>YES</b> - Along with a medical certificate from a relevant qualified doctor
5	Transfer to new course within 4 weeks of start of original course	Any fee difference in full	<b>NO</b> - Fees refunded back to debit/credit card or Cheque posted (after tutor advises of transfer)
6	Student makes a written complaint regarding the course and/or quality of teaching which is upheld by the Principal	A proportion of the fees as recommended by the Principal	<b>YES</b> - Together with details of complaint in writing
7	Student is excluded after passing through stage 3 of the career ready standards	<b>None</b>	<b>No refund will be made and therefore no application is required</b>

## **Refunds/adjustments will not normally be made when:**

- Student withdraws from course for personal reasons, such as moving house, the death of a family member, pregnancy or change of employment including loss of employment (but in certain situations credit notes may be issued at the absolute discretion of the College to enable the student to complete their course of study without further charges)
- Student withdraws from course for medical reasons not directly affecting course attendance (but in certain situations credit notes may be issued at the absolute discretion of the College to enable the student to complete their course of study without further charges)

## **Additional Information**

- All refunds/adjustments must be approved by the relevant Curriculum Director or Principal and for those above £1000 also by the CFO or Executive Principal
- If an application for refund/adjustment is unsuccessful an explanatory letter will be sent
- Any appeal against refusal should be made in writing to the College within 2 weeks of receipt of letter

## **Fee Setting Procedures**

### **Fees on ESFA or GLA co-funded programmes**

ESFA or GLA funding for co-funded learners assumes that the College will charge a fee equivalent to 50% of the unweighted matrix funding rate for the qualification. The matrix funding rate is set out in the Learning Aims section of the ESFA Hub on the HM Government website. This fee is known as the standard fee.

The standard fee may be increased from the rate calculated following the guidelines above where there is a strong market demand and clear evidence exists that learners are willing to pay a higher rate or where costs associated with the provision are not adequately reflected in the matrix funding rate.

### **Fees for programmes that are eligible for an Advanced Learner Loan**

ESFA Advanced Learner Loans funding and performance management rules set out the basis on which fees can be charged. The maximum fee chargeable is the weighted matrix funding rate for the qualification.

Accordingly, the College will charge a fee equivalent to the weighted matrix funding rate for the qualification.

### **Fees for programmes that are eligible for an Advanced Learner Loan where the learner does not take out a loan or is ineligible for a loan**

For all of its Adult Skills Budget provision the college receives an Area Costs adjustment to the published matrix funding rate. As an Inner London College this amounts to a funding uplift of 20% and is automatically calculated within the ILR.

For students in receipt of Advanced Learner Loans, the ILR generated funding reports show the amount that the College can claim in respect of students recorded on the ILR as being in receipt of an Advanced Learner Loan. This sum is then claimed from the Advanced Learning

Loans fund that is paid to the College by the ESFA.

Accordingly, if a learner is not eligible for a loan or decides not to apply for a loan, the College needs to receive the 20% uplift. In those cases, the fee payable by the learner needs to be set at 20% above the matrix value.

## **Fee Payment Arrangements**

**As a general rule, all tuition fees due must be paid to the College in full prior to the commencement of the course to which the fees relate.**

There are certain circumstances where the student will be able to enrol for their course without a payment being made, as follows:

- The student is being sponsored by their employer and presents at enrolment a purchase order or a signed letter on headed notepaper from their employer undertaking to pay the student's fees
- The student is eligible for and has applied for an Advanced Learning Loan
- The student has paid 50% of the total fee due, and has signed an addendum to their learning agreement to agree to pay the balance of their fees to the College by instalments.

Students who are not fully funded will not be allowed to complete their enrolment unless they have paid in full or meet one of the criteria set out above.

## **Arrangements for payment by instalment**

On enrolment, the student will make a payment to the College amounting to 50% of total fees due for the course.

The student will sign an addendum to their learning agreement committing to pay the balance of the fees to the College by direct debit from a bank account over a 3-month period following the start of their course.

If the course is less than 3 months, then the full fee must be paid at enrolment.

If the course fee is less than £360 then the fees must be paid in full at enrolment.

Any student that fails to pay their first instalment will have their access to the College blocked immediately and the student will be given five working days to make their first instalment payment. Failure to pay within five days will result in the student being excluded from the College.

Should a student fail to pay their second or subsequent instalment(s), the College will initially employ their normal non-punitive reminder process. Should this be unsuccessful the College will be responsible for contacting the student and deciding what further action should be taken, including exclusion from the College.

If the student withdraws or is withdrawn/excluded by the College, all fees due up to that date will be payable in full and recovery of those fees may be passed to an external organisation to recover those debts.