

FEES POLICY 2020/21

Purpose

This document outlines Inspire Education Group's approach to setting and operation of fees associated with academic provision for the period 1 August 2021 to 31 July 2022. In preparing this document care has been taken to ensure that the recommendations of the Office for Students, the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and the Adult Education Budget funding requirements have been given due consideration and that recommendations of the Competition and Markets Authority have also been considered.

Scope

This policy applies to all fee-paying learners of Inspire Education Group.

The Policy Statement

The Group aims to optimise income from fees and charges by adopting a market driven approach to setting fee levels, but also wherever possible to take account of an individual's ability to pay. This document sets out the basis on which charges are arrived at and the circumstances in which learners may not be required to pay the full fee. Wholly owned subsidiaries (UCP and APT) have their own specific Fees Policies to meet regulatory requirements.

This Policy applies to all learners of IEG. This includes adult learning for adults aged 19 and over studying a Level 3 qualification and above who are required to pay fees, operating in conjunction with the student loan company.

Learners or their sponsors, unless they qualify for exemptions/waivers, are to be charged tuition fees and other fees.

The Group must ensure that when a learner starts learning they are aware of fees that they may have to pay including course fees and other fees during the time spent following the aim.

The Group must also ensure that all learners are aware of their own fees and the Group charging policy; so that if a learner's circumstances change they are informed of the consequences in respect of the fees which may or may not be charged.

These principles extend to all areas of charging for teaching and related services, for further education, educational and training contracts, and commercial activities. Where the award of a grant supports the activity, then the terms of that grant, if different from the policy principles, must take precedence.

A fees schedule will be produced annually and will be authorised by the Group Executive. This will summarise fee levels, concession entitlement and refund policy. Higher rates may be calculated for learners for whom the Group does not receive any ESFA or other grant funding as this will essentially represent a full cost delivery. In addition, the Group has the discretion to negotiate arrangements with employers for large numbers.

Fee remission will be offered in accordance with government directives and to learners in groups for whom the ESFA offers discretionary fee compensations.

Fee refunds or waivers will only be allowed where the Group has cancelled a course, there is a justified complaint, or in exceptional personal circumstances, as described in this Policy.

All learners at the time of enrolment must have a method of payment of fees in total which include:

- Fully Funded through ESFA and/or Local Authority
- Fee Paid fully by the Student
- Payment by Employer
- Payment through a loan scheme - Advance Learner Loan/Student Loan

1. **TUITION FEES**

The Group will review the tuition fees annually. For part-time courses the assumed fee income will be a percentage of the National Funding Rate for the learning aim in line with ESFA recommendations.

In determining the appropriate fees, the Executive Team will consider market conditions and Group Strategy, ESFA funding regulations as well as the cost of running the course.

Where a course lasts for two or more academic years a tuition fee is charged annually. The fee calculated will be applicable for the duration of the course and indicative fees for future years may be given but these are subject to change each year unless the learner pays upfront for future years.

Learners who fail to complete their ESFA funded programme within the allocated time are no longer eligible for ESFA funding. If the learner wishes to return in order to complete these studies a further charge will be made.

Learners who apply to transfer to an alternative learning programme may incur an additional charge if there is an increased fee level associated with the new programme of study.

Late joiners will be charged the full tuition fee applicable to the programme followed.

2. **19 PLUS FULL-TIME LEARNERS**

Learners will be charged a standard tuition fee for each year of their course.

A charge will also be made for examination registration at the start of the course. Additional charges may be made for materials, equipment, uniforms, educational visits and non-attendance at assessment tests or exams.

Learners may be eligible for fee remission if the course is eligible under the 'Lifetime Skills Guarantee' funding, or an advanced learner loan if they are studying at level 3 to 6, and these loans may cover the cost of tuition so learners do not have to pay upfront.

The fees applicable for these learners will be based on a maximum calculated from the Learning Aims Reference Service calculation of funding and will be supported by the availability of the advanced learning loan. www.gov.uk/advanced-learning-loans.

19+ apprentices do not contribute financially to the direct cost of learning and will not be charged fees.

3. **FEE CONCESSIONS**

Fee remission is available as per the Education Skills Funding Agency Rules to all 16-18 year old FE learners, including those on part-time programmes and for adult learners who meet the specified criteria.

Where fees are remitted for learners who meet the criteria, the Group will not charge the learners tuition fees or exam registration fees.

The categories of learners who are entitled to fee remission are:

- All 16-18 year old FE learners (the Secretary of State does not expect tuition fees to be charged to full-time or part-time 16-18 year olds)
- 19-23 learners studying up to their first **full** Level 2 qualification
- 19-23 year-old learners studying their first full Level 3 qualification
- 24+ learners studying a specified range of first full Level 3 qualifications
- Learners studying English and maths learning aims as part of the new suite of English and maths qualifications up to level 2
- Learners undertaking skills training up to Level 2 only on universal credit, because they are unemployed and required to undertake skills training up to level 2, or are receiving Job Seekers Allowance, Employment and Support Allowance and are in a work-related activity group
- Unemployed learners wanting to enter employment and in receipt of state benefit studying up to level 2
- Any other remission categories as advised by the Education Skills Funding Agency in the funding rules 2021/22.

Learners not in receipt of full fee remission are expected to pay tuition fees.

4. **LEARNERS WITH SPECIAL EDUCATION NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND)**

Learners aged 19-24 years on their start date that have additional learning support (ALS) needs over £6,000 including those with an Educational Health Care Plan (EHCP) in the year will be funded through the ESFA in the first instance. Enrolments above the funded level will be paid by the relevant Local Authority. There is an assumption from the ESFA that no fees would be collected for learners in the above category.

SEND students who are funded through the ESFA and have an ALS below £6,000, will be expected to pay a fee unless they meet the fee remission criteria.

5. **OTHER FEES**

If the ESFA fully funds a learner's programme, the Group must not make compulsory charges relating to the direct costs of delivering a learning aim. Direct costs mean administration, registration, assessment, materials or

examination costs and can include charges for identification passes, uniforms, tools and materials where the learner cannot achieve their learning aim without them.

Optional extras may be charged as a fee to the learner and this can be applied to trips and visits that are not a central part of their learning. The Group may also charge for items not relating directly to the learning activity. Charges may be made to fully funded learners or learners funded by loans if they want to keep materials used in a learning activity outside of the learning environment e.g. artwork, models, food.

If learners are directly responsible for the payment of other fees, staff should ensure that learners are made aware of these additional costs.

Any late entry fees incurred by the Group will be recharged to learners, unless the late entry is the fault of the Group. Once sums have been paid over to an external body, refunds cannot be made nor any sums invoiced waived.

Any learners who fail to attend an examination will be charged the awarding body fee, except where the absence is due to illness and a doctor's certificate can be provided.

6. **ADDITIONAL QUALIFICATIONS – FULL-TIME LEARNERS**

If learners wish to enrol on additional qualifications that are not part of their full-time programme, then this will need to be evaluated and agreed on an individual basis as outcomes are related to age, then they will be liable for payment of all fees incurred. The additional qualification must be checked and agreed by the Chief Financial Officer before the learner is enrolled.

7. **EDUCATIONAL VISITS AND MATERIALS**

Some full-time programmes include field trips and/or residential which are an integral part of the programme.

All educational visits should be self-financing. Charges for visits should be in line with Group policy. The Group does not aim to generate any surplus from student visits; any deficit resulting from an educational visit will be borne by the organising department. The cost of materials should generally be additional to the tuition fee.

8. **APPRENTICESHIP FEES**

From May 2017 apprenticeship funding and the contributions expected from employers have changed, the following table gives a summary of fees and contributions due for apprenticeships started after 1st of May 2017:

* Funded value is provided from the Education Skills Funding Agency

** From April 2017 employers with an annual wage cost of over £3 million are required to pay 0.5% Apprenticeship Levy which should be used to fund the apprenticeship course fees, with employers needing to release the levy allocation to the delivering provider or Group to pay fees.

Where a 5% employer contribution is payable by the employer the Group will invoice termly across the period of the course.

Age of Apprentice	Type of Employer	Funded value	Employer Contribution payable
16-18	Less than 50 employees	100%*	0%
16-18	Over 50 employees	95%*	5%
19+ (adult)	Non Levy paying employer	95%*	5%
16-18 & 19+ (adult)	Large Apprenticeship Levy Paying	100% from the employer apprenticeship levy fund**	0%

9. **GROUP STAFF**

All full-time and part-time Group staff are entitled to £300 towards the costs of any of the Group's part-time Further Education (FE) courses to support their personal development. The programme needs to be related to the employee's job. If the course is not related to the employee's job, the contribution by the Group is taxable in accordance with HMRC guidelines. Where there are other fees in addition to the tuition fee, i.e. residential, registration fees, etc. further financial support will be at the discretion of the budget holder.

Attendance on the learning programme must be outside normal contracted working hours, alternatively staff that are released for training must make up the time.

Where fees are incurred staff should obtain authorisation from the HR Department before enrolling and process their application through the Student Services Team.

Teaching qualifications are available to staff employed as teachers or trainers during work hours. Agency staff will be liable for their own registration and tuition fees.

10. **14-16 YEARS LEARNERS**

Alternative Curriculum Programme

Fees are paid by schools, Social Services or Local Authorities for students on the full-time Alternative Curriculum programme. Payment is expected to be made on receipt of invoice. Pro-rata rates are available for late starters and part-time learners. Leavers will be eligible for full cost to end of year.

Other learners under aged 16 years

Learners under the age of 16 years (except those covered by the above categories) who wish to join any full-time course must have permission from their Local Authority to join a College within the Group. The Group needs to seek confirmation from the ESFA that the learner will be funded before they commence their programme.

Learners who are under 16 years who wish to join any part-time course will not be funded therefore liable to pay the full adult fee applicable to the course plus a subsidy to cover any loss of funding.

11. **PAYMENT OF FEES**

All fees become liable on the completion of an enrolment form either by the learner or their sponsor unless the learner is entitled to full fee remission or any of the following applies.

All students are entitled to a two week cooling off period from the latter of:

- Date of Enrolment
- Start Date of the Course

Students withdrawing at this point will be liable to a 10% administration fee, up to a maximum of £30.

Payment of fees may be made by cash, credit or debit card, bank transfer, or cheque.

12. **INSTALMENT PLANS**

Payment of fees may be made in instalments when fees due at enrolment exceed £350.00.

Students can agree a payment plan through Flexed, which requires:

- 1/3 of the fees to be paid prior to commencement
- All fees to be paid at least three months before the end of the course

Whilst FlexEd pay plan is free of interest, there is a £6.00 administration charge for each instalment collected by FlexEd from the student. The first payment the student makes to FlexEd will include the full administration fee.

Overseas students are not normally eligible for the instalment plan and any exceptions must be agreed in advance by the Chief Financial Officer.

13. **NON-PAYMENT OF FEES**

Continued attendance on a programme of study is dependent upon the learners' payment of their fees.

Where instalment terms have been agreed, but an instalment is not paid by the due date the full outstanding balance will become immediately payable, together with an additional administration charge to cover the extra collection costs. Learners who default on instalment agreements will not be offered this facility for any subsequent enrolment.

Where fees remain outstanding three months before the completion of a programme of study, the learners will not be entitled to complete the course. In addition, learners who undertake a programme of study, but are asked to leave because of outstanding fees will be flagged on the MIS system, and will not be allowed to enrol on further programmes of study until the outstanding debt has been cleared.

If a learner or their sponsor pays for fees by cheque, and the issuing bank subsequently dishonours this cheque, an administration fee of £30.00 per default will be charged to cover the additional costs of re-collection.

Learners undertaking a two-year programme will **not** be allowed to progress to the second year of the course where fees relating to the first year remain unpaid.

14. **REFUNDS**

Please refer to the Refund Policy for detailed information. Refunds of tuition fees will be given in the following circumstances:

- Where a course is closed or cancelled by the Group a full refund will automatically be made to all eligible learners enrolled without request
- When the Group has evaluated that the learner is not suitable for the course and no alternative course is offered
- Where the IEG Refunds Panel agrees a refund as defined in the Refunds Policy.

Should a learner decide to withdraw from a course in accordance with the Consumer Rights Act 2015, automatic refunds will be granted if withdrawal is made in writing and is within the 14 calendar day 'cooling off' period. The 14 day 'cooling off' period commences from the day after learning commences. Should a learner transfer to a different course the 14 day 'cooling off' will recommence from the day after learning commences.

The Group does not normally refund tuition fees where a learner simply decides to stop attending a course.

15. **FEE RATES**

~~Fee rates may vary between Peterborough and Stamford College sites, please see Appendix 1 for a full list of fees by site.~~

Learners commencing courses covering more than one year will be charged their tuition fee annually. The fee calculated will be applicable for the duration of the course and indicative fees for future years may be given but these are subject to change each year unless the learner pays upfront for future years.

Please see 2020/21 Fees Schedule at Appendix 1 is current as at 01/05/2021, is subject to change where the ESFA issue updated fee recommendations on the Learning Aims Reference System
<https://hub.fasst.org.uk/Learning%20Aims/Pages/default.aspx>

Related Procedures and Documentation

Policy No: FIN001 Financial Regulations

Responsibility

This policy is the responsibility of the Chief Financial Officer

Date of Last Review May 2021

APPENDIX 1

2021/22 FEES SCHEDULE

Home (and qualifying EU nationals) Full-time FE Learners aged 16 – 18 years

Full time learners between the ages of 16 – 18 years will not be charged tuition or examination fees (for a first attempt at an examination).

Home (and qualifying EU nationals) Full-time FE Learners aged 19 years plus

Tuition Fee: See Appendix 2

Part-time Courses aged 19 years plus

For part time courses the assumed fee income will be 50% of the National Funding Rate for the learning aim in line with the ESFA recommendations. The fees are outlined in Appendix 2

Other Fees

Course specific depending on materials and trips to be charged.

Resit Fees

Learners re-sitting a unit or examination will pay a re-sit fee.

- GCE/GCSE – Group will pay for first attempt, students to pay for any resits at a cost of £25 per unit.
- BTEC Level 2 Written papers – Group will pay for first attempt, students to pay for any further resits at a cost of £25 per unit.
- BTEC Level 2 Online exams – Group will pay for first two attempts, student to pay for any further resits at a cost of £25 per unit.
- BTEC Level 3 Written exams – Group will pay for first attempt, student to pay for any resits at a cost of £40 per unit.
- City & Guilds online exams plumbing/electrical/catering/construction - Group will pay for first two attempts, students to pay for any further resits at a cost of £10 per unit.
- City & Guilds online exams Animal Care – Group will pay for first two attempts, students to pay for any further resits at a cost of £25 per unit.
- Construction Awards online and written exams- Group will pay for first two attempts, students to pay for any further resits at a cost of £10 per unit.

The exams department will not make any entries for resits until payment has been made by the student.

Online Assessments

All learners will get two free attempts for online assessment tests. On the third attempt, the learner will be eligible for a resit fee of £20.00. Payment for online assessments must be made at least 2 days prior to the test.

A Level Resits

All learners will be charged £25.00 for each A Level resit taken.

Part Time

£12.00 per guided learning hour plus exam registration fee if applicable.

14-16 Years Learners

Charges are agreed at individual authority & school level.

Additional charges may be made for materials examination registration and Additional Learning Support.

Alternative Curriculum Programmes

£4,500 if still on school roll

£6,000 for other (i.e. in care, excluded, etc.)

(additional charges may be made for materials, examination registration and ALS)

Increased flexibility.

Other students under age 16 years

As per National Base Rate for the qualification quoted in the ESFA Funding Guidance.

Other Courses not covered above

Full time English as a Foreign Language (EFL) annual tuition fee - £4,250

Part time EFL annual tuition fee - £10 per hour

Full cost course, in college (per lecturer hour) - £100 per hour, divided by assumed cohort size (18/19 £100 per hour)

Full cost course, offsite (per lecturer hour) - £90 per hour, divided by assumed cohort size (18/19 £90 per hour)

Work Based Learning discrete course hourly rate (managing agents) - £80 per hour

Default Fee

£30.00 per dishonoured cheque.

APPENDIX 2

All Fees are subject to the following conditions:

1. Qualifications highlighted are generally over 2 years and therefore FE Fees are due each year.
2. Advanced Learner Loans Fees (ALL) are taken at the start of the course and cover the duration of the qualification.
3. Advanced Learner Loan. Only one Advanced Learner Loan can be given in a subject area at a Level, therefore it is important to ensure that the loan is taken out for the highest qualification required.