



Amersham & Wycombe College Policy Document

## Fees Policy

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| For information to: | All Staff                                      |
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## **Fees Policy 2011/12**

**Contents:**

Introduction

Setting and approval of fees

Tuition fees

Exam/Registration fees

Charges for materials

Educational visits

Payment of fees

Payment of fees by instalment

Refund of fees

Fee remission

Appendix 1 - Fees table

Appendix 2 - Credit policy for tuition fees

Appendix 3 - Fees refund policy

## **Introduction**

This fees policy sets out the general guidelines under which the College operates its management of fees. It includes a Fees Table at Appendix 1, which is updated annually to reflect changes in funding body policies, market forces and inflation.

The fees set out at Appendix 1 must be applied unless the written approval of the Principal or Vice Principal to waive or reduce fees has first been received.

## **Setting and approval of fees**

The fees that the College charges for the courses it provides are to be set each year by the Principal in conjunction with the relevant managers under delegated authority from the Corporation. Any changes to the fees policy in general should also be considered at this time.

## **Tuition fees**

The College's policy is to charge the recommended rates for the courses funded by the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) and the Skill Funding Agency (SFA).

Tuition fees for full cost courses must be sufficient to cover both direct and indirect costs bearing in mind the likely learner numbers. The proposed fees for all new full cost courses should be initially reviewed with the Head of Finance in line with the course costing and approval process.

Fees for HE courses will be reviewed annually in line with the Office for Fair Access (OFFA) thresholds.

Fees for learners under the age of 16 will also be reviewed annually.

## **Exam and registration fees**

The College's policy is to pass on the charge made by the awarding body, except to those learners who are 16-18 years old, Work Based Learning learners, and those who may from time to time be exempted. No instalment payments are available for examination or registration fees.

The College will charge the full cost of the exam fee to learners for re-sits, (irrespective of their age or the exam that they are sitting except for Functional Skills exams which are free of charge) on the following basis:

### 16-18 learners' examination fees for resits

Where examination fees are not charged, this exemption will only apply to the initial attempt at an examination or qualification. Each subsequent attempt or re-sit is subject to a £25 administration fee and the awarding body charges being paid by learner before they are entered for the examination.

### 19+learner's examination fees for resits

19+ learners will pay for their initial attempt at a qualification. In addition, each subsequent attempt or re-sit is subject to a £25 administration fee and awarding body charges being paid by learner before they are entered for the examination.

## **Charges for materials**

16-18 and 19+ learners on courses where the use of materials is significant may be charged for a contribution to the material costs. Any such charge must be published and prospective learners must be advised of the cost before they enrol.

## **Educational visits**

The College's policy is to charge the actual cost on to the learners, which includes the transport, subsistence and entry costs etc. of any staff accompanying the visit.

## **Payment of fees**

All learners must be issued with an ID card before they may start a course. To obtain an ID card, a learner must either

- Pay in full / the first instalment, or
- Provide proof to enable remission / exemption, or
- Bring a letter from their employer/sponsor confirming that their employer will pay their fees.

16-18 year old learners (on 31<sup>st</sup> August prior to the start of the course) on YPLA funded courses are exempt from the payment of all fees, except for certain materials and other consumables which must be specified before enrolment. These learners must provide proof of age at enrolment.

Other learners are expected to pay their fees in full when they enrol subject to the eligibility to pay by instalments as set out at Appendix 2.

Learners may pay in cash, by cheque, or by Master / Visa card. Cheques must be supported by a bankcard.

## **Payment by instalments**

The College expects all learners to pay their fees at the point of enrolment. In exceptional circumstances, learners may apply to pay by instalments as outlined at Appendix 2 – Payment Instalment Plan for Tuition Fees.

There will be an administration charge of £25 for late payment of any instalments. Any learner who has a bad payment record, or who has a current debt to the College, will not be eligible for payment by instalments.

## **Refund of fees**

The rules governing the refund of fees are detailed at Appendix 3.

## **Fee remission**

Fee remission is applicable to all 16-18-year-old learners on YPLA funded courses, including those on part-time programmes, and continues to be available to adult learners who meet the specified criteria below.

Tuition and examination fee remission only, is available in full to learners over 19 years old taking programmes where the learning aim is a basic skills qualification and functional skills.

Tuition fee remission only, is available in full to learners over 19 years old on SFA funded courses who meet specified criteria as follows:

- Learners studying their first full Level 2 qualification.
- 19-24 (inclusive) year-old learners studying their first full Level 3 qualification.
- Those in receipt of one of the following job related allowances:
  - Unemployed people in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance
  - Unemployed people in receipt of Employment Support Allowance (Work Related Activity Group WRAG only)
- Certain learners participating in SFA funded projects where identified in the project specification.

This list is correct as at March 2011, but is subject to changes in legislation, and the latest legislation will be applied by the College.

In all cases evidence of the relevant allowance must be attached to the enrolment form.

Learners are able to make an application to the Learner Support Fund and College Hardship Fund for assistance with fees, but these funds are limited.

For HE courses the ability to pay tuition fees is means tested by the LEA. Forms are available from the learner's local authority or the Student Loan Company for applications for maintenance grants and student loans.

Additional fee remission in exceptional circumstances can only be approved by the Principal or Vice Principal.

## Appendix 1

| <b>TUITION FEES, EXAM FEES AND STUDENT FUND CONTRIBUTIONS CHARGEABLE FOR 2011/12</b> |                        |                   |  |                                |
|--|------------------------|-------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| <b>Category of Student/Course</b>  |                        |                   | <b>Tuition Fee</b>   | <b>Exam/Registration Fee</b>   |
| 16-18  | Full /<br>Part<br>time | FE                | Free   | Free                           |
| 16-18  | Part<br>time           | WBL               | Free   | Free                           |
| 19+ (Adult Skills Budget)  | Full /<br>Part<br>time | FE/WBL            | 50.0% of NBR, but free for a first full level 2 or if between 19 and 24 inclusive, for first full level 3 award              | As stated by the Awarding Body |
| 19+ (Adult Skills Budget)  | Part<br>time           | WBL               | Full cost for a full level 2 or 3 if 25+ and qualified to level 2 or above and with a large employer (250 employees or more) | As stated by the Awarding Body |
| Overseas students  | Full time              | FE/HE             | £6,700 p.a.  | As stated by the Awarding Body |
| Overseas students  | Part<br>time           | FE/HE             | £15.00 per hour  | As stated by the Awarding Body |
| HE franchised through a university   | Full time              | HE                | £2,050 p.a.  | As stated by the Awarding Body |
| HE franchised through a university   | Part<br>time           | HE                | To be determined by level of activity and target margin  | As stated by the Awarding Body |
| Under 16 (Full cost)   | Part<br>time           | FE                | To be determined by level of activity and target margin  | As stated by the Awarding Body |
| Full cost courses  | Part<br>time           | Full Cost         | To be determined by level of activity and target margin  | As stated by the Awarding Body |
| Students on non-core funded courses (project grants, ESF etc.)                       | Full/Part<br>time      | Project<br>Funded | Fees to be determined in line with the regulations relating to the funding source  | As stated by the Awarding Body |

**Students must be notified before enrolment of any additional charges they will be required to pay for materials at enrolment.**

**Students must be notified before enrolment of likely additional charges they may be required to pay for educational visits in the future, should they choose to go on them.**

## INSTALMENT PAYMENT PLAN FOR TUITION FEES

We expect all learners to pay their fees at the point of enrolment. In exceptional circumstances, learners may apply to pay by instalments as outlined below. Any learner who has a bad payment record, or who has a current debt to the College, will not be eligible for payment by instalments.

The College will not allow payment by instalments to any learner for tuition fees less than £300 chargeable in any one year. For the sake of clarification, a two year course, for example, with fees of £250 payable in each year (£500 in total) would not be eligible for payment by instalments but would be payable at the point of enrolment for each year.

The College will offer payment by instalments to any learner for tuition fees of £300 or more on the following basis only:

1. The fee will be paid in two or three instalments for a two or three term course respectively. The initial payment of any staged payment is due at the point of enrolment, with the second instalment being payable at the end of the autumn term for a two term course and the second and third instalments being payable at the end of the autumn term and spring term respectively for a three term course. For roll-on roll-off courses, a schedule of instalment payment dates is held by the Finance Office.
2. The instalment will be paid either:
  - in cash, cheque or Master / Visa card or
  - by direct debit for each of the two/three terms, the dates of which will be the end of the relevant previous term.
3. If a learner fails to pay for any term, he/she will be excluded from any further tuition and from the use of any College facilities, and will not be eligible to sit any relevant exams until such time as all overdue fees have been paid in full.
4. Any default in payment will be pursued by the College using all legal avenues available to it.
5. If any fees are paid late, there will be a charge £25.

### Notes:

The instalment payment start point is set at £300 for 2011/12 and is based on the SFA's requirement for colleges to charge a tuition fee of 50.0% of the National Base Rate. In subsequent years the start point will be adjusted for changes in the Retail Prices Index plus any increase in the SFA's assumed fee payable by learners.

Payment terms in relation to employers for Employer Responsive/Work Based Learning fees are subject to the College's normal credit terms of 30 days. Longer credit may be negotiated, in exceptional circumstances, on the approval of the Principal or Vice Principal.

## FEES REFUND POLICY

1. The College will fully refund a learner if the course on which they have enrolled is withdrawn by the College for whatever reason.
2. The College will not give a refund if a learner withdraws from the course on which he/she has enrolled, if the withdrawal is less than 7 days before the start of the course. The exam fee may in certain circumstances be refunded, see 7 below.
3. The learner will be encouraged to enrol on a more suitable course if the reason for withdrawal is the unsuitability of the original course, despite appropriate advice and guidance by the College. In this case, provided the transfer is made within the year, any fees already paid for the original course will count towards the fee payable for the new course. If the fees for the new course are higher, the learner will be required to pay the extra; if lower, the learner will receive a refund.
4. Refunds of the course fees if a learner is not satisfied with the quality of a course will only be considered after completion of an investigation as part of the College's complaints procedure. Refunds will not normally be entertained if a small number of classes have been cancelled during a course if suitable arrangements have been made to maintain the required level of study.
5. Registration fees are non-refundable.
6. Examination fees are non-refundable unless payment has not been made by the College to the examining body, or the fees have been refunded by the examining body.
7. Residential and materials fees will only be refunded in exceptional circumstances.
8. Any student, who pays their fees at enrolment and subsequently qualifies for fee remission, will be given a full refund.
9. Administration charges in respect of refunds will apply.