



St Helens College



University Centre
St Helens

Fee Charges and Fee Discount Policy

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Policy Aim and Scope

This Policy aims to set out how the College will:

- adhere to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) funding rules and regulations
- adhere to the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) funding rules and regulations
- be clear and transparent with regard to the setting of fees and charges
- be fair and consistent when charging fees to students and employers

This document is intended to act as a reference source and guide for fees, fee waivers, payment arrangements and other charges for the academic year 2024/25. It should be used in conjunction with the latest ESFA/LCRCA funding rules which ultimately determine whether a student is eligible to receive funding.

This policy is subject to potential further amendments and clarifications.

The range of people that this Policy applies to are:

- Students funded by the ESFA
- Students funded by the LCRCA
- Students funded by the Student Loan Company (SLC)
- Students or employers paying direct

Throughout this policy, reference is made to “home” students. Unless stated differently, “home” is defined as being normally resident for 3 years in the UK, including EU/EEA nationals with “settled status” before 1 January 2021.

This policy does not cover prescribed Higher Education (HE) provision. The College has a separate tuition fee policy for prescribed HE provision.

This policy does not cover Apprenticeship provision. The College will adhere to government funding policy and guidelines for all apprentices.

This policy does not cover Community Learning provision. The College has a separate Community Learning strategy which outlines the provision available for local residents taking steps back into education, along with the funding available.

Students of a Compulsory School Age

The dedicated school grant (DSG) calculated for each local authority (LA) contains funds for each student at compulsory school age in a maintained school, excluded from school, or educated ‘otherwise.’

Where parents seek to enrol a young person of compulsory school age on a full-time programme, the College cannot do so without first consulting the school and LA, who would be eligible to pay all due fees.

There may be some occasions where a parent or carer may be directly charged for a student's fees.

Classroom Learning – Students aged 16-18 or 19-24 with an Education Health Care Plan (EHC Plan)

Students who are aged 16, 17 or 18 years old on the 31 August 2024 and are “home” students are eligible for full funding by the ESFA. These students will not be charged tuition or awarding body registration fees.

Students with an Education, Health, and Care Plan (EHC Plan), who are aged 19-24 years old on the 31 August 2024 and are “home” students are eligible for full funding by the ESFA. These students will not be charged tuition or awarding body registration fees.

Where there are examinations included in a course, students will not be charged for their first entry. Students may be charged to re-sit an examination. The College also reserves the right to charge students entry fees for non-attendance at examinations.

Depending upon the requirements of the programme, students may be required to pay for specialist course materials, clothing/equipment they wish to retain for use outside of the course, photocopying, printing, or trips/visits that are not an integral part of their study programme.

In the vast majority of cases, students will only be funded by the ESFA for learning which leads to an external certificate offered by a regulated awarding organisation and approved on Section 96.

Students are also ineligible for funding if they are already enrolled on either full time ESFA funded provision or are full time HE students at another institution. In most cases Students should only be funded at one institution at a time.

Classroom Learning – Students aged 19+ (not covered in section 3)

Students who are aged 19 or over on the day they start their qualification and who are “home” students may be eligible for funding by either the ESFA or LCRCA, depending on their individual circumstances and the qualification they wish to study.

The College will maintain fee assessment documentation that follows the latest versions of the funding rules in assessing eligibility for fee waivers and to determine an individual's circumstances.

The eligibility for a fee waiver will be checked at the start of each qualification or programme.

Students aged 19 or over on the day they start their qualification and who wish to study a Level 3 or above qualification may be required to apply for an Advanced Learner Loan (see section 6), or self-fund, depending on their individual circumstances and the qualification they wish to study.

Students will only receive funding for qualifications approved by the ESFA. The ESFA reserve the right to change a qualification's approval status in-year. Each qualification has a set funded amount, which can be found using the find a learning aim service.

The ESFA/LCRCA will co-fund 50% of a qualification's worth. The remaining 50% will also be funded by the ESFA/LCRCA if the student qualifies for a fee waiver for the qualification they wish to study (known as fully funded); otherwise the student, their sponsor or employer will be charged the associated fees.

For qualifications at level 2 or below, students who do not qualify for a fee waiver and are subject to payment may also have their fees paid for by the College's Discretionary Learner Support (DLS) fund. This is subject to the student being assessed and their individual circumstances meeting the support fund criteria.

Students who qualify for a fee waiver (fully funded students) will not be charged tuition or awarding body registration fees.

Students who are co-funded will not be charged awarding body registration fees.

Students who are continuing a qualification that started in the previous academic year will continue to receive the fee remission as established in the preceding year, even if their circumstances have since changed.

Where there are examinations included in a course, both students who qualify for a fee waiver and co-funded students will not be charged for their first entry. Students may be charged to re-sit an examination.

Students who are fee-paying (full cost / commercial, see section 7) will be required to pay all course-related costs, including tuition, registration, examination fees and re-sits.

The College reserves the right to charge all students entry fees for non-attendance at examinations.

Depending upon the requirements of the programme, students may be required to pay for specialist course materials, clothing/equipment they wish to retain for use outside of the course, or photocopying, printing, or trips/visits that are not an integral part of their Study Programme.

Determining fee charges for Co-funded Students

The College has a standard approach to the setting of fees for co-funded students. Each qualification has a set fee based on the ESFA's Adult Skills Fund rate, which can be found using the find a learning aim service. The College will adhere to the ESFA's expectation that students, their sponsors or employers will pay 50% of the Adult Skills Fund Unweighted rate.

Workplace Learning

Students will only be eligible for funding for learning in the workplace where a student has a legal entitlement to full funding for a specific qualification.

No student will be funded for any learning aim delivered at an employee's workplace that is relevant to either their job or their employer's business, unless the learner has an entitlement to full funding.

Advanced Learner Loans

Students aged 19 or over on the day they start their learning aim and are studying a Level 3 or above qualification may apply for an Advanced Learner Loan to cover the costs of their course, where they are not eligible for funding.

In the vast majority of cases, the College will charge students the maximum loan amount, which can be found using the find a learning aim service. These students will not be charged tuition or awarding body registration fees.

Where there are examinations included in a course, students will not be charged for their first entry. Students may be charged to re-sit an examination. The College also reserves the right to charge students entry fees for non-attendance at examinations.

Depending upon the requirements of the programme, students may be required to pay for specialist course materials, clothing/equipment they wish to retain for use outside of the course, photocopying, printing, or trips/visits that are not an integral part of their programme.

Students who do not have an Advanced Learner Loan in place at a time specified by the College may be withdrawn from their course.

Full Cost and Commercial Provision

Students who are not eligible to public funding can choose to pay all associated course costs themselves, or a third party may choose to pay on their behalf. The College will provide details of the fees due in these instances.

The College will also work with employers to develop bespoke programmes that can be delivered to individuals or a workforce. In these cases, the College will provide details of the fees due.

Re-taking a Qualification

With the exception of study under the maths and English legal entitlement, students are not funded to re-take qualifications to improve a grade. Students may wish to self-fund in these instances.

Reduction in fees due to recognition of prior learning

Students may qualify for a reduction in tuition fee costs where they have already achieved an element of the qualification or transferable credits for Qualification and Credit Framework (QCF) qualifications on the QCF. These cases must be referred to the Director of MIS, for consideration.

A reduction will be applied, apportioned based on units fully completed e.g. for 3 completed units out of 9 in total, the fee is set at 66% of the standard fee

Payment of Fees

In order to enrol, students must demonstrate that satisfactory arrangements are in place for the payment of fees.

Students can choose to pay fees either in full or via instalments.

At the point of enrolment, the full amount due, or the first instalment, must be paid, otherwise the course cannot be commenced.

For commercial full cost courses:

- For short courses (less than 4 months in planned duration) the full course fee is payable in advance with no refund. For longer courses, no fee is payable for withdrawal within 2 weeks, 25% is payable for withdrawal after 2 weeks but within 2 months, 50% is payable for withdrawal between 2 months and 4 months and 100% is payable for withdrawal after 4 months of the start date of the course.

- For funded courses (including Advanced Learner Loans), the fees due at the point of withdrawal will be calculated on a pro-rated basis in line with the funding rules.

Where a student's fees are to be met by a third party (such as their employer) the student must either supply, at the time of enrolment, a letter from the company or organisation confirming that fees will be paid or return confirmation to the College within 7 days of enrolling.

In the absence of such confirmation, the student remains liable for the full cost of the course.

Students who apply for an Advanced Learner Loan from SLC will have their fees collected on their behalf by the College.

Failure to pay fees

Continued attendance upon a programme of study is dependent upon payment of fees.

Non-payment of fees or failure to agree acceptable terms of payment may result in one or more of the following:

- Examination entries not being processed
- Physical access to the course being denied
- Withdrawal from the programme

All outstanding fees will be subject to debt recovery processes which may involve a third-party organisation.

Enrolment on a course may be refused where there are outstanding fees relating to previous enrolments or academic years.

Refunds

Fees may be refundable, in full or part, if the College should close a course or the continued participation of the applicant is made impossible or inappropriate by some action of the College.

At the discretion of the College and where the student can demonstrate that extenuating circumstances exist to prevent them from continuing with their course, the Head of Finance may authorise a refund or credit note following an appeal.

Financial Support for Students

A range of bursaries and other financial support is available to students. Details can be found on the College website or from the Student Services team.