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| <b>CURRICULUM/LEARNER POLICIES AND PROCEDURES</b> |                                   | <b>Southwark College</b> |
| Policy title:                                     | <b>Fees Policy 2020-21</b>        |                          |
| Applies to:                                       | All staff, employers and learners |                          |
| Owner of Policy                                   | Director of Finance and Planning  |                          |
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| Linked Documents                                  | NCG Fee Policy                    |                          |

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## 1. Policy Statement

The high level principles for the setting of fees are determined by the corporation of NCG and these principles are incorporated into this policy. This document covers the specific policy on fees for Southwark College (“the College”).

This policy relates to learners who satisfy the government’s residency criteria and would qualify as ‘Home students’. For details on ‘international students’ please see The NCG International Students Fees Policy – Information can be found here: <https://www.ncl-coll.ac.uk/international/fees-and-payments>.

## 2. Southwark College Fees

The high level principle for the setting of fees for government funded courses is covered in Section A (2.1), the principles for fees for adults funded by Adult Learning Loans is covered in Section B (2.2) and principles for all other fees in Section C (2.3).

All fees are based on the ESFA rate at the time of writing where applicable. This is subject to change if the applicable published rate is amended.

### 2.1 SECTION A - FE Fees (Government Funded Courses)

Provision for 16-18 year olds on Programmes of Study remains entirely free of fees.

The policy requirements in this section apply to government funded FE provision, this excludes Advanced Learner Loans and those courses covered in section C of this policy.

NCG Divisions will observe national guidance that currently states that fees are remitted nationally for the following categories of learners:

- 16–18 learners
- Unemployed adults in the following categories:
  - In receipt of Jobseeker’s Allowance (JSA), including those receiving National Insurance credits only
  - In receipt of Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and are in the work-related activity group (WRAG)
  - In receipt of Universal Credit, earn less than 16 times the National Minimum wage per week or £338 a month and are determined by Jobcentre Plus (JCP) as being in one of the following groups:
    - All Work Related Requirements Group.
    - Work Preparation Group
    - Work Focused Interview Group.
- Other unemployed adults who:
  - Are in receipt of other state benefits and earn less than 16 times the National Minimum Wage a week or £338 a month; and
  - Want to be employed and are undertaking learning that is directly relevant to their employment prospects and the local labour market needs.
- First Full Level 2 qualification for learners aged 19 up to 23 (if the qualification appears in the ‘Legal Entitlements’ list)

- First Full Level 3 qualification for learners aged 19 up to 23 (if the qualification appears in the 'Legal Entitlements' list)
- Skills for Life (excluding ESOL) or Functional Skills
- Foundation learning for adults aged 19 up to 24 with no prior level 2 qualification
- English and Maths provision for all adults up to and including level 2, who have not previously attained a GCSE grade A\* - C or grade 4, or higher.
- For college-based courses the fee rate, for co-funded students (excluding loans-based provision) is up to 50% of the unweighted National Learning Aim Reference System (LARS) matrix rate as shown on the Government system 'The Hub'.
- Those that are eligible for co-funding, and, earn less than £20,962 annual gross salary (£17,004 outside of GLA devolved region) based on the hourly London Living Wage, on the assumption of a 37.5 hour contract with paid statutory holiday entitlement.

### **Fee Levels**

Where fees are to be set, they will be based upon LARS (Learning Aim Reference Service) funding rates and include registration, tuition and examination fees, with exceptions for some professional courses and those negotiated with employers.

### **Payment of Fees**

All FE and full cost tuition fees are currently due to be paid on enrolment. However, instalments are permissible for courses where the fee is greater than £200, and as follows:

- For learners who may be unable to pay their fees in full at enrolment the college offers a payment plan deposit of 25% upon enrolment followed by up to four equal instalments by Direct Debit. The final Instalment date must not extend beyond the length of the course.
- Learners whose employers have agreed to pay their tuition fees will be required to produce a letter/purchase order from their employer at the time of enrolment confirming that they will cover the amount they will pay.

In the case of most two year courses the fees are payable each year upon enrolment in each year.

### **Missed Payments of instalments**

Learners who fail to make any of their instalment payments in line with their Direct Debit Mandate/Agreement will have their pass blocked and their learner status withdrawn, which means they will be unable to attend College or sit examinations. The payment plan will be cancelled and the outstanding balance will be payable in full with immediate effect in order to be reinstated. Any unpaid fees will be referred to 3<sup>rd</sup> party debt collection agency to collect the outstanding fee(s) on behalf of the College.

## **2.2 SECTION B - FE Loans - Advanced Learning Loans/Student Loans Company (SLC)**

Advanced Learner Loans help people aged 19 and over undertake vocational, technical and professional qualifications at Levels 3, 4, 5 and 6. Loans provide a source of fees support for learners, enabling them to reap the personal and financial benefits of their study, which in turn will support the economy.

Loans are not means-tested and are available to eligible learners who are:

- aged 19 or older on the first day of their learning aim
- studying one or more approved learning aims at Levels 3, 4, 5, or 6

The availability of loans at Level 3 does not replace an individual aged 19 to 23's legal entitlement to full funding for a first full Level 3. The College must check a learner's entitlement before providing information on loans. A learner aged 19-23 cannot access funding for a first full Level 3 qualification and access a loan for the same qualification at the same time.

Learners aged 18 on or before the 31 August that start a full-level 3 programme will be eligible for free tuition. If a learner decides to 'top-up' their qualification to an extended diploma (or equivalent) and is aged 19 or over (excluding learner aged 19-24 with an EHCP) on or before the 31 August they will either need to make an application for Advanced Learner Loan support or pay the advertised course fee.

Learners will remain liable for fees until they can provide the College with evidence of a successful loan application. The College will start to collect fees by direct debit from learners with incomplete or unapproved loan applications from 1 October. In the event that a loan application is subsequently approved any fees collected will be refunded to the learner.

Student Finance England will 'write off' any outstanding Advanced Learner Loan balances owed for an Access to HE course once you complete a higher education course. This means you don't have to repay it. The higher education course must be eligible for Student Finance.

### **Enrolment**

Learners will be enrolled on the presentation of a Loan Confirmation Letter (provided by SLC after successful application). Learners who incur fees but are not able to produce a SLC confirmation letter will be required to sign a Direct Debit mandate to confirm accept of their liability to pay fees prior to enrolment.

Learners not wishing to enter into a loan agreement will be liable for payment of the relevant tuition fee, or any up-front fees not covered by loans pre payable at the time of enrolment. This will follow the payment schedule noted in the "Payment of Fees" section above.

In the event of a change of circumstance where the loan is withdrawn by SLC, the Learner will become liable for their fees.

We will work with the learner to make them aware of this situation and arrange instalment payments by direct debit mandate. Otherwise please refer to the "Refund Policy Section"

### **Fee Levels for loan based provision**

The Skills Funding Agency allow providers to set a maximum fee for loan –based provision based on the fully funded value set on the HM Government ‘Hub’. The minimum threshold to generate a loan is a fee level of £300. This would place the maximum fees for individual qualifications at between £724 and £11,356. It is the responsibility of the learner to enter into an agreement with the Student Loans Company and secure a loan facility to pay for this provision. The College will offer support and guidance to the learner to undertake the loan application.

Fees for classroom based provision funded by a loan will be set at 100% of the listed fee (LARS matrix weighted rate).

The availability of funding and loans is summarised in the table below:

| <b>Provision</b>  | <b>19-23 year olds</b>                   | <b>24+ Unemployed</b> | <b>24+ Other</b> |
|---|--|-----------------------|------------------|
| English and maths up to and including Level 2   | Fully funded                             | Fully funded          | Fully funded     |
| Level 2   | Fully funded<br>(first and full)         | Fully funded          | Co-funded        |
| Provision to progress to Level 2  | <b>Fully funded</b>                      | Fully funded          | Co-funded        |
| First Level 3   | Fully funded<br>(first and full)         | Loan funded           | Loan funded      |
| Second or subsequent Level 3  | Loan funded                              | Loan funded           | Loan funded      |
| Traineeship   | Fully funded<br>(including 24 year olds) | N/A                   | N/A              |
| English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) learning up to and including Level 2                   | Co-funded                                | Fully funded          | Co-funded        |
|   | Fully funded – unemployed                |                       |                  |
| Learning aims up to and including Level 2, where the learner has already achieved at Level 2 or above | Co-funded                                | Fully funded          | Co-funded        |
|   | Fully funded – unemployed                |                       |                  |

### **2.3 SECTION C – Other Fees**

#### **Full Cost**

Fees for commercial (non-government funded) courses or full cost will be charged at a level to reflect the full price to the College and be approved by a member of Senior Management Team.

## **Subcontractor fees**

All subcontracting must comply with the NCG 'Subcontract Management Framework' and 'Supply Chain Fees and Charges' policies.

## **Apprenticeship Fees**

The policy requirements in this section apply to the provision of apprenticeship frameworks and standards, where the funding draw-down is predicated by the payment of the employer fee. This will apply to employers not eligible to pay the levy and also to levy-paying employers who have exhausted their levy funds.

Southwark College will observe national guidance for apprenticeships that states:

- Fees must be aligned to the appropriate band for the applicable apprenticeship standard or framework and can be no more than the cap for that band
- Funding will be triggered up to the cap on the basis of £9 for every £1 that the employer pays as a cash contribution
- The fee contribution must be cash and not any sort of 'in kind' arrangement and must equal 5% of the total agreed price/
- The total cost of the apprenticeship can be set at any level up to the cap and forms part of an 'apprenticeship agreement' with the provider. This will be part of the total cost of apprenticeship, which the employer contribution would be 5% of the total.
- The employer may be eligible for ESFA incentive payments. These incentive payments must be made to the employer by the provider to a strict timetable
- The provider has discretion over the nature of the payments from the employer, both in terms of the timing and number of instalments, with the proviso that they are collected every three months at a minimum. Funding, however, will only be paid if fees are evidenced as being received. Invoices must be paid within 30 days or by direct debit if paid in instalments.
- Providers will need to have fair processes in place to ensure that fees and/or funding are repaid if the programme is terminated

The fees will be an upfront payment in full, or four equal instalment payments over the duration of the Apprenticeship via Direct Debit. The discretion to agree the provision of instalment payments for an employer or group of employers resides with both the Manager of Apprenticeships and the Director of Finance and Planning.

Apprenticeship costs to an employer or group of employers can only be varied at the discretion of both the Manager of Apprenticeships and the Director of Finance and Planning.

Where subcontractors are used to deliver part of a programme the Apprenticeships team must ensure that a specific apprenticeship contract is in place.

## **Examination Fees**

Awarding body fees are not charged to 16- 18 year old learners whose tuition fees are remitted.

Learners are able to have one complimentary retake within the academic year (whether initial exam is failed or missed), after which further examinations will be charged at the examination retake fee (All courses are normally charged the examination/registration fees set by the awarding bodies for their qualification at the time of enrolment) which is payable to the College prior to the examination entry.

### **Learners Under 16**

Where learners of compulsory school age wish to follow part of their learning at the College a fee will be agreed in advance with the relevant school or Local Authority.

### **Higher Education Courses**

Southwark College will be charging fees for new undergraduate entrants as per NCG HE Fees Policy or the indirect funders HE fee policy. Further Information can be found here: <https://www.ncgrp.co.uk/guide-to-information/our-policies-and-procedures/> .

### **International Students**

Southwark College will be charging fees for learners as per the International Fees Policy, which will be made available as appropriate.

Terms and Conditions for International Students are available separately and further information can be found here: <https://www.ncl-coll.ac.uk/international/fees-and-payments>

### **Other Charges**

Where a course has significant increased costs for special or expensive items such as uniforms, equipment or consumables these costs will be passed on to learners. These charges include;

- Clothing or equipment, if necessary for student's health or safety a charge will be made for clothing and equipment retained by student;
- Sale of learning materials;
- Fines for late return of library books or other disciplinary fines;
- Deposits on lockers, ID cards, keys, library cards and equipment that are fully refundable except in cases of theft or damage;
- Non course-specific photocopying and printing;
- Recreational use of leisure facilities and other non-academic facilities where activity taking place is not a requirement of a course syllabus;
- Optional extra activities where activity is taking place outside a required part of an agreed study programme

### **3. Refund Policy**

It is recognised that there may be occasions where fee payments need to be refunded back to the learner/sponsor. This process needs to be fair and consistently applied and the following sets out the College's Fee Refund Policy.

The student has the right to withdraw from a course within 14 days of enrolment, and expect a full refund. Where this is a short course of less than one month duration in total, the cooling off period will be pro-rated.

After the relevant 'cooling off period' described above:

- If Southwark College has to cancel a course, we will credit the fee and refund any fee payments to the student/sponsor.
- If the student agrees to an appropriate alternative then the original fee payment would need to be credited and the payment would be re-receipted against the new alternative course/programme and in this instance then fees will not be refunded.
- Southwark College will refund a proportion of the tuition fee if a learner withdraws from the course due to ill health or another reason approved by the Principalship.

For refund purposes, cooling off periods and the length of time on a course will be calculated from the date of enrolment to the date that withdrawal is communicated to the College. Where the desire to withdraw from a course is not communicated to the college the period of time on programme, and therefore cost associated, will be calculated to the point at which the MIS department receive the withdrawal request.

Learners may apply for a refund or partial refund of tuition fee payment in any extenuating circumstances and this should be directed to the Course Tutor in the first instance, who will then request a decision by the Principal via their Head of Department.

A £25 administration fee plus examination costs will be deducted from any refund made, this applies to all types of provision.

#### **Learners with a Loan from the Student Loans Company**

If the College cancels a programme, the Student Loans Company will be notified and the loan for this programme cancelled in full.

#### **Apprenticeships:**

The Service Level Agreement must state where employers may apply to for a refund or partial refund of their fee payment in any extenuating circumstances.

#### **4. Updates**

Due to changes and updates in Government Funding, this Policy may from time to time be updated. See front page for versions.



