

## **1 Introduction**

The purpose of this policy is to provide information on our fees and charging systems including the setting and administration of fees, processing of payments and refunds and the operation of payment schedules. The aim is to standardise the fees for learning provision in a way that is fair and transparent, however, it is recognised that there may be fee adjustments due to differing course content, and due to the needs of our learners and locality.

There are different categories of fees and government subsidies depending on the learner's age, eligibility, level of course and/or qualification. This policy will help to identify if you are required to pay course fees.

For a learner to be eligible for government funding the learner must have the legal right to be resident in the UK at the commencement of their course and have been resident for a minimum of 3-years. EEA nationals need to hold settled status to be eligible for funding.

If a learner is starting a level 3 course and are aged 19+ they may qualify for an Advanced Learning Loan to help with the cost of course fees. For more information please visit Advanced Learning Loans on the Student Finance England website.

## **2 Apprenticeship Course Fees / Funding**

Levy-paying Employers who have a pay bill over £3 million each year must pay the Apprenticeship Levy. Levy-paying Employers will receive levy funds to spend on apprenticeships and will

- Choose their training provider
- Agree a total price which includes the costs of training, assessment and end-point assessment
- Pay for training and assessment with funds through their apprenticeship service account
- Once the agreed apprenticeship training has started the Levy Paying Employer makes monthly payments from their service account to their chosen training provider.

For Employers who do not pay the Levy the government will fully fund Apprenticeship training costs up to the funding band maximum for Apprentices who at the start of their apprenticeship training are aged 16-21 on 01 August (or 15 if their 16<sup>th</sup> birthday is between the last Friday of June and 31<sup>st</sup> August) or aged 22-24 years old with an Education Health and Care Plan (ECH) provided by their local authority and/or have been in the care of the local authority.

Employers will be able to benefit from government incentive schemes applicable at the commencement of and during their apprentices learning, full details of all incentive schemes will be provided to the employer by First College.

## **3 Course Fees**

Course Fees are defined as all monies payable by either a learner or third party (for example employer) in return for course delivery. All Fees must be paid at the start of the course unless a payment schedule has been agreed, see item 6 Payment Schedules.

Course Fees comprise of three main elements, these being tuition fees, resource costs and examination and/or registration costs:

- Tuition Fees comprise of the standard cost of course delivery
- Resource Costs include the cost of all essential resources including any course-related services provided by First College (eg workbooks, e-portfolio etc)
- Examination and registration fees are the costs of registering learners with awarding organisations

## **4 Charging Policy**

Employer Course fees are payable for learners, rates vary, and these are updated annually, see Course Fees and Charging Annexe 1.

Learner fees are payable by all learners aged 19+ who are not eligible for funding or an Advanced Learner Loan.

Course fees are not usually payable by unemployed learners aged 19+ who are claiming benefits and are able to provide appropriate written evidence. Learner evidence which is inappropriate will result in the learner being charged a full fee rate.

Course fees are not payable by learners recruited to English and Maths courses if no previous Level 2 qualification in Maths and English has been achieved.

Where the end dates for a course have been extended and further teaching and/or assessment has taken place First College may charge an additional fee. See Course Fees and Charging Annexe 1.

Where the course includes additional units, each additional unit will incur an additional fee. See Course Fees and Charging Annexe 1.

Some courses incur additional costs such as books, personal equipment and/or clothing. Staff are to make sure that learners are aware of these costs before they enroll. Learners may be eligible for Bursary and/or access to Learner Support Funds.

If a learner refuses to complete any individual element of their programme, which will result in non-completion of their course they may be liable to pay to First College both the cost of learning and/or the amount of funding lost.

If a learner withdraws from their course, they are still liable for their course fees and will be invoiced accordingly. This applies up to the point of actual withdrawal.

First College reserves the right to withhold certification for learners who have outstanding fees.

## **5 Responsibility**

The Chief Executive is responsible for the implementation of the Course Fees and Charging Policy and for the setting of Course Fees. All Team Leaders are responsible for ensuring that Course Fees are charged and/or suggesting any proposed amendments to the Chief Executive. Variations to the standard fees chargeable can only be approved by the Chief Executive.

First College reserves the right to vary fees in-year in light of competition and in recognition of individual cases made for altering fees.

Responsibility for providing details of Course Fees lies with all customer-facing staff including Managers, Team Leaders, Administration, Recruitment, Advisers, Assessors and Tutors.

For all Course Fees and additional charges an Invoice Request form and Schedule of the Apprenticeship Learning Agreement will be completed and forwarded to finance for action.

The Finance Manager is responsible for arranging the collection of course fees, for the processing of any approved fees refunds and for pursuing bad debts.

## **6 Payment Schedules**

Payment Schedules can be agreed provided the course lasts for a minimum of 20 weeks and for Advanced Loans the total fees due per annum are at least £300.

The Team Leader will agree a payment schedule; this can be in-full, weekly, monthly, termly and/or quarterly. Full details will be supplied to the Finance Manager. The first installment must be made within one calendar month of the course start date.

Any learners who are having trouble with their payment schedule are encouraged to discuss this with the relevant Team Leader who may be able to agree new terms. The Team Leader will advise Finance of any newly agreed payment terms.

Failure to comply with an agreed payment schedule could result in the learner being asked to leave their course or in becoming liable for payment of the full outstanding balance. The Finance Manager will agree actions with the Chief Executive.

## **7 Refunds**

Refunds will not normally be issued and are only payable in respect of fee payments made. Refunds may be issued in the following circumstances;

- Because a course has been cancelled by First College
- Where a learner is prevented by ill health from continuing and medical evidence is submitted
- Where a complaint about a course has been upheld and a refund is appropriate

The Team Leader is responsible for determining a learner's eligibility for a refund in accordance with this policy and for calculating the level of refund due, approval is required by the Chief Executive. The Chief Executive has the authority to authorise any refund and to arrange for its payment.

## **8 Non-Funded Courses – Full Cost Provision**

Where First College enters into an arrangement to provide courses that will not attract public funding First College will seek to charge a fee that covers the direct costs of delivery and preparation. First College will charge fees competitive with what is being charged in the local area.

The following costs need to be taken into consideration; labour, materials, examination costs, internal quality assurance, external quality assurance, travel, room and venue costs.

Course Fees are established for half day, full day, and individual attendance. As a model half day courses are for a maximum of 3 hours; full-day courses assume 6 hours' attendance plus other breaks and lunch. *Please note; hot and cold drinks are provided; however, lunch is not provided unless an additional charge is agreed.*

Where an individual attendee rate is charged the minimum number of attendees for the course to run is 4. Where Specialist Tutor delivery is required the Course Fees charged will reflect actual costs incurred.

In all cases approval must be sought from the Chief Executive to reduce these fees. All fees are payable in advance or on the first day of attendance.

## **9 Review**

This Fees and Charging Policy is subject to a minimum annual review and may be subject to in-year updates addressing DfE policy changes. This review will usually be conducted during July annually to coincide with the setting of course fees, Annexe 1 Fees and Charging Policy refers.

**Signed**



**Paul McCooey**  
**Chair**