

Course Fees and Charging Policy

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.

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

In order for a learner to be eligible for government funding for their learning programme the learner must have the legal right to be resident in the UK at the commencement of their programme.

If you are starting a level 3 course and are aged 24+ you may qualify for a 24+ Advanced Learning Loan to help with the cost of your course fees. For more information please visit 24+ Advanced Learning Loans on the Student Finance England website.

2 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 5 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 work-book, e-portfolio etc)
- Examination and registration fees are the costs to First College of registering learners with awarding organisations

3 Charging Policy

Course fees are not payable by learners aged 16-18.

Employer Course fees are payable for learners aged 19+, 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 a 24+ Learner Loan.

Course fees are not usually payable by unemployed learners aged 19+ who are claiming benefits.

Course fees are not payable by learners engaged onto English and Mathematics Functional Skill courses.

Where the end dates for a course have been extended and further teaching and/or assessment has taken place First College will 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, trips, personal equipment or clothing. Make sure that learners are aware of these when you enrol as you will be responsible for these costs. Learners may be eligible for Bursary and/or access to Learner Support Funds.

Examination re-sits are chargeable at actual cost plus a £10 administration fee.

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

If you withdraw from your course you are still liable for your fees and will be invoiced accordingly. This applies up to the point of actual withdrawal if you are full-cost, have taken out a loan with Student Finance England etc.

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

4 Responsibility

The Business Manager is responsible for the implementation of the Course Fees and Charging Policy. The Learning Contracts Manager is responsible for the setting of Course Fees and subsequent approval by the Quality Assurance Group. All Team Leaders are responsible for ensuring that Course Fees are charged and/or suggesting any proposed amendments to the Learning Contracts Manager. Variations to the standard fees chargeable can only be approved by the Learning Contracts Manager.

First College reserves the right to vary fees in-year in the light of competition and in recognition of cases made for altering fees. All amendments to Course Fees, Annexe 1 are to be made by the Quality Assurance Manager.

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

Adjustments to the standard fees chargeable for a course, for example to compensate for a variation in course delivery or individual agreements must be submitted by the Team Leader to the Learning Contracts Manager for approval.

For all Course Fees and additional charges Recruitment will complete an Invoice Request form and forward this to the Team Leader for action. Alternatively, the Team Leader will complete an Invoice request form and forward this 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.

5 Payment Schedules

Payment Schedules can be agreed provided the course concerned lasts for a minimum of 20 weeks and 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 start date.

Any learners who are experiencing difficulty with their payment schedule are encouraged to discuss this with the 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 to discuss and agree actions with the Team Leader and/or Learning Contracts Manager.

6 Refunds

Refunds will not normally be issued. However, 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 there has been an overcharge
- Where a complaint about a course has been upheld and a refund is appropriate

Refunds are only payable in respect of fee payments actually made. Examination and/or registration fees will only be refunded on occasions where First College has not incurred any actual expenses in relation to examination entries or registrations on behalf of the learner.

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 any refund due.

The Learning Contracts Manager has the authority to authorise any refund and to arrange for its payment by finance.

7 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. As a general rule 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 5 hours attendance plus other breaks and lunch.

Please note; lunch is not provided unless an additional charge is agreed.

Where an individual attendee rate is charged there must be a minimum of 6 attendees for the course to run.

Where Specialist Tutor delivery is required the Course Fees charged will reflect actual costs incurred.

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

8 Review

This Fees and Charging Policy is subject to a minimum annual review. This review will usually be conducted during April / May annually to coincide with the setting of course fees.

Annexe 1 Fees and Charging Policy refers.

Signed



**Val Nixon
Chair**

Signed



**Ian Dickinson
Business Manager**