

Fees Policy for the academic year 2016/17



## **Northbrook College Sussex**

### **Fees policy for the academic year 2016/17**

**For courses starting on or after 1<sup>st</sup> August 2016 to 31<sup>st</sup> July 2017**

Approved by the Board of Governors of Northbrook College Sussex on 25<sup>th</sup> February 2016

Contents:	Page
1. Introduction	3
2. Fees structure outline	5
3. Tuition fee setting guidance for curriculum and delivery teams	6
4. Students aged 16-18 funded by the Education Funding Agency(EFA) and students aged 19-24 with a LDA or EHCP	7
5. Students aged 19 and over funded by the Skills Funding Agency(SFA)	9
6. Apprenticeships	12
7. Traineeships	13
8. Students aged 19 and over accessing Advanced Learner Loans	14
9. Higher Education students	16
10. International students	18
11. Full cost recovery and self-financing courses	20
12. Helping Individuals and Employers Pay	21
13. What happens where a student/sponsor has a change in financial circumstances?	22
14. Franchise partner and sub-contractor management fees	22
15. Refunds, transfers, deferrals(non HE) and late starters	23
16. How do I suggest improvements/complain about this policy?	24
Appendix A –Fee Remission and Payment Plans	25

## **1. Introduction to the 2016/17 fees policy**

1.1 In accordance with the Articles of Government, the Board of Governors at Northbrook College Sussex (NBCOL) is required to set the policy by which tuition and other fees payable are determined.

1.2 The Board of Governors, in setting the fees policy for 2016/17, recognise that there is a balance to be struck between maximising our income from fees against the potential barrier to learning that this approach might create.

1.3 For the purposes of this policy the term 'Funding Bodies' encompasses the Education Funding Agency funding: -

- students aged 16-18 full or part time,
- students aged 19-24 and have a Learning Difficulty Assessment (LDA), an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP), a Moving On Plan or a S139 Statement

and The Skills Funding Agency (SFA) funding: -

- Adult Skills, including Apprenticeships
- Traineeships
- Community Learning
- Advanced Learner Loans for those aged over 19

1.4 This policy outlines the general fees pricing policy for 2016/17. We expect that all course fees will broadly conform to the principles as outlined accepting that there will be the need, from time to time, to flex our pricing to better reflect prevailing market conditions.

1.5 In order to be both pro-active and reactive to changes in market conditions the detailed pricing structure setting authority is delegated to the Vice Principal Finance and Corporate Services (VPFCS) using the following underlying principles:

- That our pricing enables us to compete effectively with other colleges and training providers
- That our pricing enables us to develop existing and new markets that are strategically important to us
- Where our market position allows to set fees that maximises our potential to generate income
- Where appropriate, we can price activity to attract a particular cohort of students or business sector

- 1.6 The Availability of funding and student eligibility criteria are both subject to change in Funding Body policy. The eligibility criteria outlined within this fees policy are correct at the time of authorisation by the Board of Governors. We will make all best endeavours to inform students of changes that may affect them at time of enrolment or through course information sheets/other marketing materials.
- 1.7 The college reserves the right to make such alterations to the described courses, fees, tutors, venues & services as may prove necessary. If a single class meeting is affected by venue closure and/or tutor illness but an alternative date is arranged then no refund will apply.

## **2. Fee structure outline**

### 2.1 Qualifications supported by Government Grant where a contribution is expected from the student/their sponsor

- The tuition fee that contributes towards the cost of the teaching/delivery of the qualification/course being undertaken
- Awarding Body examination fees and/or registration fees
- Materials Fees where these costs represent a significant cost of running the activity
- A college registration fee where appropriate
- The administration fee payable for students who withdraw or fail to start the course they have enrolled on

### 2.2 Fees for students from outside the EU

- The price quoted will itemise where appropriate the tuition fee, awarding body registration and/or examination fee, materials fees and other course related costs together with any college registration/administration fee.

### 2.3 Commercial fee recovery courses

- The price quoted will itemise where appropriate the tuition fee, awarding body registration and/or examination fee, materials fees and other course related costs together with any college registration/administration fee.

### **3. Tuition fee setting guidance for curriculum and delivery teams**

- 3.1 For SFA funded programmes we will set our fees in line with expectations of an assumed 50% contribution from the learner/employer/sponsor. Curriculum Heads of Department, when determining their fees structure for their offer, must seek to maximise the tuition fee payable. Where fees are set below the assumed level approval must be first secured from the VPFCS prior to any communication of the fee being made.
- 3.2 Fees chargeable for apprenticeships and workplace/workforce development activity, funded by the SFA, are expected to be in line with the assumed contribution outlined above i.e. 50%.
- 3.3 Tuition fees charged by our franchise partners will be agreed as part of the contractual negotiations, where a fee is chargeable we expect sub-contractors to offer flexible payment terms as set out in section 5 and appendix A of this policy.
- 3.4 For those students aged over 19 accessing the Advanced Learner Loans, we will set our tuition fee at the maximum amount of Loan available for the learning aim. Registration and/or examination fees and materials (including essential kit and uniform costs) will be assumed to be included within the maximum Loan value available. Where appropriate and a Curriculum Head of Department can justify a competitive advantage a lower fee may be set but only after approval has been sought from the VPFCS.

#### **4. Students aged 16-18 funded by the Education Funding Agency(EFA) and students aged 19-24 with a LDA or EHCP**

4.1 Home and EU students aged under 19, or in the case of students with an Education Health Care Plan or a Learning Difficulty Assessment up to and including age 24, on 31 August in the first year of the course will not pay tuition fees for the duration of their course whilst they remain under 19 (or up to and including age 24 EHCP/DSA holders) at the start of their programme (qualification aim). They will not be charged the awarding body registration/examination/assessment fee where the student meets or exceeds the college attendance target of 90%.

Where a student falls below the attendance target the college reserves the right to request a contribution towards the awarding body registration/examination/assessment cost for the first and any subsequent sitting. Where a student fails to attend a pre-agreed examination and cannot produce either a medical certificate or evidence of significant extenuating circumstances confirming that they were unfit/unavailable to attend the college reserves the right to charge for any re-sit.

4.2 Equipment/material and uniform fees and other costs can vary widely across our curriculum offer. **There will be a requirement for some students to make a Disclosure and Barring Services application in order to undertake and complete their studies; students will be informed of this requirement prior to enrolment. In all circumstances the cost of the DBS application will be borne by the student.** In order to maintain viability of our provision we will, where appropriate, recover costs of materials and other course related expenses from all learners (save for that deemed mandatory by the awarding body).

4.3 Fees will not be charged for Health and Safety equipment where it is essential for learning to take place. We actively encourage students to purchase their own equipment, materials and uniforms for use within and outside college in pursuit of their qualification. Any requirements of this nature will be communicated to students prior to and during enrolment. ***Students unable to purchase their own kit and equipment may be eligible for Under 19 Bursary support for these costs. The application form and guidelines are published on our website and all enquiries should be directed to the Student Financial Services team.***

4.4 There will be no charge for mandatory trips and visits costs that are deemed essential to the completion of the qualification. We will expect to recover the costs of non-mandatory trips from all students that choose to take part.

4.5 Students aged 18 on or before the 31<sup>st</sup> August that start a two year programme (e.g. and extended diploma) will be eligible for free tuition for the duration of the two years

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

## 5 Students aged 19 and over funded by the Skills Funding Agency (SFA)

5.1 Students whose programme is co-funded by the SFA will be charged a tuition fee calculated by reference to the un-weighted funding base rate of the learning aim. This tuition fee will usually be equivalent to 50% of the un-weighted base rate.

5.2 Where a student commenced a programme/qualification in a prior year that was more than one year in duration (a two-year extended diploma for example), the annual tuition fee level charged for the year in which they started will be honoured in 2016/17.

5.3 Subject to providing satisfactory and current evidence and a full assessment, the following categories of home students and citizens of a country within the European Economic Area (EEA) are entitled to **tuition fee** remission:

- Individuals aged 19 or older who are not starting an apprenticeship, and:
  - are starting GCSE English or maths where they do not currently have these qualifications at grades A\* to C,
  - are progressing towards GCSE English or maths at grade C or above, and are starting English or maths at a level above that at which they have been assessed,
  - Are starting or progressing towards Functional Skills English and Maths from entry to level 2
  - Are starting an approved Stepping-Stone qualifications in English and Maths
- Individuals aged 19 to 23 on the day they start:
  - If a student is aged 18 on the 31<sup>st</sup> August of the year the course starts they are deemed to be 18 and are eligible for free tuition. This applies to one and two year duration programmes.
  - entry-level and level 1 learning aims (excluding English, maths or English for Speakers of other Languages (ESOL)) delivered through classroom learning where they have a maximum prior learning accreditation of level 1, and are progressing to a full level 2 qualification
  - level 2 learning aims (excluding English, maths or ESOL), which are not classed as full, delivered through classroom learning where they have a maximum prior learning accreditation of level 1, and are progressing to a full level 2 qualification
  - Their first full level 2 qualification
  - Their first full level 3 qualification, or

- Their first level 4 qualification (30 credits or more) without having achieved a first full level 3 qualification
- Further learning up to and including Level 2 if they are unemployed on the day they enrol and are in receipt of a means tested benefit
- Individuals aged 19 or over on the day they enrol on learning aims up to and including level 2 who need help to move into work, progress in work or remove a barrier to getting into work, and who are:
  - released on temporary licence (RoTL), undertaking learning outside a prison environment and not funded through OLASS, or
  - receiving Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA), including those receiving National Insurance credits only, or
  - receiving Employment and Support Allowance (ESA) and are in the work-related activity group (WRAG), or
  - receiving Universal Credit and mandated (required) to undertake skills training
- Individuals aged 19 or over on the day they enrol on learning aims up to and including level 2 who:
  - are unemployed and
  - are receiving any **means tested** state benefits not listed above (including those on Universal Credit and ESA and not in the groups identified in this section) and
  - want to enter employment and believe skills training will help them to do so, and where they
  - are enrolling onto a learning aim which is directly relevant to both the individual's employment prospects and the needs of the local labour market, and
  - the aim is delivered through classroom learning (SFA non-apprenticeship funding)
- Unemployed individuals aged 19 and over on the day they enrol on their ESOL learning aim

- 5.4 Equipment/material and uniform fees and other costs can vary widely across our curriculum offer. **There will be a requirement for some students to make a Disclosure and Barring Services application in order to undertake and complete their studies; students will be informed of this requirement prior to enrolment. Students that can claim free tuition (fully funded) will not be charged for completing the DBS application, students that pay tuition fees (co-funded) will be charged.** In order to maintain viability of our provision we will, where appropriate, recover costs of materials and other course related expenses from all learners (save for that deemed mandatory by the awarding body).
- 5.5 Fees will not be charged for Health and Safety equipment where it is essential for learning to take place. We actively encourage students to purchase their own equipment, materials and uniforms for use within and outside college in pursuit of their qualification. Any requirements of this nature will be communicated to students prior to and during enrolment. **Students unable to purchase their own kit and equipment may be eligible for Learner Support Funding. The application form and guidelines are published on our website and all enquiries should be directed to the Student Financial Services team.**
- 5.6 There will be no charge for mandatory trips and visits costs that are deemed essential to the completion of the qualification. We will expect to recover the costs of non-mandatory trips from all students that choose to take part.
- 5.7 Learners enrolled on courses previously funded through the separate Adult Community Learning Grant will, from 2016/17, fall within the single Adult Education Budget. As previously, we expect learners to meet the same eligibility criteria as all SFA funded learners. We expect that the guidelines for charging fees will be different for mainstream SFA fundable provision, consequently we will continue to charge fees that reflect our strategy for Community Learning and Engagement.

We expect that learners attending a course identified as Community Learning to purchase the appropriate Health and Safety equipment (Personal Protective Equipment-PPE) prior to the start of their course and to wear it at all times whilst in the learning environment. Learners will be informed of the course PPE requirements prior to enrolment.

Materials fees may be payable by all aged 19 and over learners. For courses where such fees are payable, learners will be informed of the additional fees prior to their enrolment.

## 6 Apprenticeships

- 6.1 Tuition fees for apprentices under the age of 19 on the day they start their apprenticeship are fully funded by the Government.
- 6.2 NBCOL expects all employers to contribute towards the cost of training where the apprentice is 19 or over. Tuition fees chargeable to employers will be, in most cases, in line with Government expectations. Where there is significant competition from other providers the Board of Governors recognises that this could lead to a high degree of price sensitivity. Consequently, where competitive forces are setting the market price we will look to remain competitive by setting a price that maximizes our opportunity in a given market. Any reduction in fees has to be agreed with the VPFCs prior to confirmation with the employer.
- 6.3 Equipment/material and uniform fees and other costs can vary widely across our apprenticeship offer. **There will be a requirement for some apprentices to make a Disclosure and Barring Services application in order to undertake and complete their apprenticeship; apprentices will be informed of this requirement prior to enrolment. In all circumstances the cost of the DBS application will be borne by either the apprentice or their employer.** In order to maintain viability of our provision we will, where appropriate, recover costs of materials and other course related expenses from all apprentices (save for that deemed mandatory by the awarding body).
- 6.4 Fees will not be charged for Health and Safety equipment (PPE) where it is essential for learning to take place within college. Whilst in the workplace providing Health and Safety equipment is the responsibility of the employer. We actively encourage students to use their own PPE within the college training environments. We will loan PPE to apprentices should they not have their PPE with them at college.
- 6.5 There will be no charge for mandatory trips and visits costs that are deemed essential to the completion of the qualification. We will expect to recover the costs of non-mandatory trips from all students that choose to take part.
- 6.6 Where a student is aged under-19 at the start of their apprenticeship they remain eligible for fee remission throughout the term of their apprenticeship framework
- 6.7 From April 2017 The Government is introducing a new funding approach for the delivery of apprenticeships through the introduction of an employer levy. At the time of compiling this version of the 2016/17 fees policy there is insufficient detail in the public domain to determine the appropriate fee structure. This will be updated as soon as sufficient details are available. Any transition arrangements for apprentices who start their apprenticeship under the current rules will be informed as to how the changes may affect them and their employer as soon practicable.

## **7 Traineeships**

- 7.1 The traineeship programme provides unemployed young people with skills and experience to progress to an apprenticeship or sustainable work.
- 7.2 The EFA fully fund traineeships for all 16-18 year old students together with students over the age of 16 but under the age of 25 that have an EHCP or LDA. A learner cannot start a traineeship until 1 August after they have left school in the academic year in which they have their 16th birthday and must meet the EFA residency requirements.
- 7.3 The SFA fully fund traineeships for 19-24 year old learners. The learner must be aged 19 or over on 31 August in the funding year and under 25 at the start of the traineeship.
- 7.4 Fees will not be charged for Health and Safety equipment (PPE) where it is essential for learning to take place within college. Whilst in the workplace, providing Health and Safety equipment is the responsibility of the business providing the work experience opportunity. We actively encourage students to use their own PPE within the college training environments. We will loan PPE to trainees should they not have their PPE with them at college.
- 7.5 There will be no charge for mandatory trips and visits costs that are deemed essential to the completion of the traineeship. We will expect to recover the costs of non-mandatory trips from all students that choose to take part.

## 8. Students aged 19 and over accessing Advanced Learner Loans

- 8.1 Students aged 19-23 who have already achieved a full Level 3 qualification, subject to meeting the eligibility criteria, will be able to access an Advanced Learner Loan to fund Level 3 to 6 qualifications. 24+ students studying qualifications at levels 3 to 6, subject to meeting the eligibility criteria, will also be eligible for an Advanced Learner Loan. If the student provides evidence of a successful loan application, fees are raised to Student Loans Company. Students wishing to enrol on a college course who have applied (or are intending to apply) for an Advanced Learner Loan, but who are unable to provide evidence of successful loan application at enrolment, must enter into a Part Payment Agreement. We will not look to start collecting instalments until the 1<sup>st</sup> November, or two months after the enrolment date for courses starting after September. Students will remain liable for fees until they can provide the College with evidence of a successful loan application. Payment dates will be agreed annually by the VPFCS. We will refund any instalments paid on receipt of SLC confirmation within 10 working days.
- 8.2 The College will update the Student Loans Company of current enrolments on a monthly basis. This will inform the Student Loans Company of withdrawn learners. Change of circumstances may result in the re-assessment against the eligibility criteria and a change to the loan entitlement.
- 8.3 Equipment/material and uniform fees and other costs can vary widely across our course offer. **There will be a requirement for some learners to make a Disclosure and Barring Services application in order to undertake and complete their qualification; learners will be informed of this requirement prior to enrolment. The cost of the DBS application will be included within the tuition fee where this is relevant. If a student is already employed in a sector where a DBS application is mandatory we will expect the employer to have already completed and paid for the application on behalf of the student prior to enrolment.** In order to maintain viability of our provision we will, where appropriate, recover costs of materials and other course related expenses from all learners (save for that deemed mandatory by the awarding body).
- 8.4 Fees will not be charged for Health and Safety equipment (PPE) where it is essential for learning to take place within college. Whilst in the workplace providing Health and Safety equipment is the responsibility of the employer. We actively encourage students to use their own PPE within the college training environments. We will loan PPE to apprentices should they not have their PPE with them at college.
- 8.5 There will be no charge for mandatory trips and visits costs that are deemed essential to the completion of the qualification. We will expect to recover the costs of non-mandatory trips from all students that choose to take part.

8.6 NBCOL receives an Advanced Learner Loan Bursary from the Skills Funding Agency to support students from low-income backgrounds. **The application form and guidelines are published on our website and all enquiries should be directed to the Student Financial Services team.**

## 9 Higher Education students

9.1 The fee payable for full-time Home students covers tuition, materials, mandatory visits and all assessment charges. HE full-time fees for 16/17 are as follows: -

- Foundation Degrees £ 7890
- UG Degrees £ 7890
- Degree top-up £ 7890
- Degree top-up £ 8450 with bridging

9.2 Fees will not be charged for Health and Safety equipment where it is essential for learning to take place, we will provide students with an option to borrow this free of charge or purchase essential equipment required to support their learning which can be used outside of their learning/college environment.

9.3 Payment arrangements for HE learners who are not applying for a student loan letter will be 1<sup>st</sup> November, 1<sup>st</sup> February and 1<sup>st</sup> May in equal instalments.

The majority of students will be eligible for a full student loan. If the student provides evidence of a successful loan application, fees are raised to the Student Loans Company (SLC) directly. Students wishing to apply for a student loan, but who are unable to provide evidence of successful loan application at enrolment, must enter into a Part Payment Agreement. We will not look to start collecting instalments until the 1<sup>st</sup> November. Students will remain liable for fees until they can provide the College with evidence of a successful loan application. Payment dates will be agreed annually by the VPFCS. We will refund any instalments paid on receipt of SLC confirmation within 10 working days.

9.4 The College will update the SLC on current enrolments on a regular basis. The SLC uses this data to confirm ongoing support for each student and will only continue to pay the college whilst the student remains on-programme. Where a HE student leaves after two weeks of commencing their course the full tuition fee will be payable and will not be funded by the SLC.

9.5 Where a withdrawing student feels that there is a sufficiently compelling reason why the fee, or a proportion of it, should be waived they must make their claim within one month of their withdrawal date. In this instance the withdrawal date will be taken as date MIS were formally notified of the student withdrawal (this may be different to the last date the student attended their course). Please note that a fee waiver is very rarely granted save for medical grounds or a significant life event that prohibits the student from continuing with their studies.

- 9.6 Where a student decides to intercalate their fees will be charged on the number of units completed and achieved in-year with the balance payable when they return. Under normal circumstances we expect the student to return the following year, where this is not the case the student must make a formal request in writing to the college to have this period extended. Should a student decide not to return the remaining fee for the year of study they withdrew from will become payable. This balance will not be funded by the SLC and will therefore become a personal debt. **Students who intercalate will not be able to re-enrol if they have any outstanding debts from previous years.**
- 9.7 Where a student wishes to re-take part of a full-time qualification the fee payable will reflect the number of credits being re-taken as a proportion of the total credits for that year.
- 9.8 Part-time HE fees are set on a course by course basis. Please refer to the course information page on the college website for up-to-date details. The maximum fee level for a part-time HE course for 16/17 will be £4,500.
- 9.9 Bursaries may be available to full-time and part-time HE home students. The extent and scope of any bursary 'offer' will be considered on a course by course /student by student basis and will be means tested where appropriate and relevant. The extent to which bursaries are payable will depend entirely on the availability of funds for distribution; no guarantee of payment is either made or implied on receipt of a bursary application or acceptance of same. Please refer to our college website and student prospectus for more information.
- 9.10 Please be aware that a £25 charge is levied onto all students who do not attend an examination for which they are registered.
- 9.11 Where a student secures accommodation from NBCOL those fees are payable in line with the signed contract and relevant policy document relating to college-run student accommodation.

## 10 International students

10.1 For fees purposes we classify students as **Home** or **International**. Classification is largely determined by residency. You will usually be classified as an International student if you reside from any country outside of the EU/EEA, unless you have lived in the EU/EEA for at least three years before the start date of your course, and have indefinite leave to remain in the UK.

We will need to confirm your visa status during the application process.

We judge all cases against the same criteria, in accordance with the government's guidelines. You will find a useful summary of regulations in a guide produced by the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA)

The fees that you pay as an International student depend on the type/level of course you study. Each case will be looked at on an individual basis.

For guidance on the cost of courses and eligibility, please contact the college.

10.2 The annual tuition fee level for international students attending full time Further Education level courses is £5,500. Fees for registration, examination and materials are included in the annual tuition fee. No discounted rate is available for International students wishing to study a Further Education level qualification.

Part-time Further Education level tuition fees (including fees for registration, examination and materials) charges will vary by programme and will be communicated to the student both prior to and at enrolment. It is assumed that a full time Further Education student will be on a programme of 450 hours of study, the part-time fee will generally be set using the full-time international fee pro-rated to reflect the part-time agreed programme hours.

10.3 The annual tuition fee for full-time International Higher Education level students for 2016/17 is in line with home EU students, this is subject to review from 2017/18 onwards. No discounted rate is available for International students wishing to study a Higher Education level qualification.

International part-time Higher Education fees for 2016/17 are set in the same way as Home HE students using the Full Time International HE fee as the starting point.

10.4 All International students (including those on Tier 4 Visas) must pay the full course fees at the time they apply for a VISA. For students applying for a short term study visa a deposit of £1000 or full course fees (if less than £1000) must be paid at the time they apply for a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS). For courses that are beyond one year in duration the annual fee is payable when the student confirms their enrolment for each subsequent year.

- 10.5 If a student is refused a VISA or fails to meet our entry criteria prior to the start of the course we will refund the amount paid minus £250 administration fee. For VISA refusals the refund request must be submitted within 30 days of the refusal and the student must provide a copy of the refusal letter. Where the student fails to meet our entry criteria we will automatically commence the refund process on confirmation that the entry criteria has not been achieved.
- 10.6 NBCOL reserves the right to keep the full deposit (up to £1000) if there is evidence that the refusal was due to failure to have adequate funds in place, failure to supply all the required documentation or if fraudulent documents were used.
- 10.7 Exceptions can be made to this deposit arrangement for some trusted agents, these exceptional cases will be authorised by the VPFCS
- 10.8 Where an International Student has commenced their studies under the 2015/16 fees policy pricing structure (i.e. the same fee for that year as a Home/EU student for either FE or HE is funded at/charged) they will remain on that pricing structure until they have completed their studies, this includes the fee for any 'Top-up' year.
- 10.9 Fees will not be charged for Health and Safety equipment where it is essential for learning to take place. We actively encourage students to purchase their own equipment, materials and uniforms for use within and outside college in pursuit of their qualification. Any requirements of this nature will be communicated to students prior to and during enrolment.
- Students will be expected to wear their PPE at all times where instructed to do so by their tutor. Any student attending college without their PPE will be refused entry to workshops/teaching spaces where this is a mandatory requirement.
- 10.10 Where a student secures accommodation from NBCOL those fees are payable in line with the signed contract and relevant policy document relating to college-run student accommodation.

## **11 Full cost recovery and self-financing courses**

11.1 NBCOL runs a number of courses which are not directly supported by Government Agencies and therefore the sole source of income for these courses are the fees charged to the learner / employer. For such activity we will charge a commercially viable rate reflecting market pricing and our delivery cost structure. In each case, the margin on income will be agreed by the Executive team.

Examples of commercial fee recovery courses at NBCOL are:

- English as a Foreign Language (EFL)
- Non-Government subsidised qualifications where there may be funding available but NBCOL chooses to charge a commercial fee
- NBCOL devised activity that leads to a college certificate or non-funded external accreditation.

11.2 For commercial fee recovery courses, the fee will be charged once the course is confirmed as running. Generally full fees will be charged and must be paid prior to the commencement of the course. Normally this will happen at least 48 hours before the start date unless otherwise agreed by the VPFCS. Once the course is confirmed as running and enrolment has been confirmed with the appropriate fee paid no refund will be given.

11.3 Where a course is longer than two months in duration and the overall fee is over £500 we accept 50% of the fee on enrolment with the remaining 50% payable after one month of the course start date. If the fee is not paid by the due date the college reserves the right to withdraw the student from the course and refuse any certification/acknowledgement of learning.

11.4 Materials, registration, certification/examination and other course related costs will be included in the overall fee quoted.

11.5 Fees will be charged for Health and Safety equipment (PPE) where it is essential for learning to take place. A student can choose to purchase their own PPE, details will be provided by the course tutor to ensure that the correct PPE is purchased.

Students will be expected to wear their PPE at all times where instructed to do so by their tutor. Any student attending college without their PPE will be refused entry to workshops/teaching spaces where this is a mandatory requirement.

## 12 Helping individuals and employers pay

- 12.1 Students enrolling on courses at NBCOL funded by either the EFA (16-19) the SFA (19+) and those students accessing the Advanced Learner Loan will have access to apply to the relevant bursary/support fund to support a contribution towards additional course related costs **(subject to availability of funds and meeting eligibility criteria) Please note, HE bursaries are considered in section 5.7.1 of this policy.**
- 12.2 We will continue to offer payment by instalment plans where paying the full fee up-front would create a barrier to learning. Courses where this facility is available will be clearly indicated when marketed. To help NBCOL avoid escalating costs associated with bad debt collection and write-off we will ask all learners to sign a declaration in advance giving us authority to check their credit reference for which a charge of £30 will be levied. In addition, at enrolment we will ask evidence to support proof of identity and proof of address. **Adults over 19 accessing the Advanced Learner Loans and HE learners are eligible for NBCOL part payment plans as long as the balance to be paid by the learner (not the SLC), is more than £200 and the programme is longer than 10 weeks in duration.**
- 12.3 A discount for up-front payment is available on certain college courses/qualifications, please see appendix A for more details.
- 12.4 When working with employers we will look to develop the most commercially attractive package for them. This will often include a mix of fully funded, co-funded and commercial fee recovery activity.

### **13. What happens where a student/sponsor has a change in financial circumstances?**

- 13.1 Where learners are unable to pay their fees through unforeseen, extenuating personal or financial circumstances they will be advised and guided through various support options, this might include Career development loans, Student Loans or assistance from our college learner support funds or Bursary. All applications are judged on their individual merit, awards made will reflect the nature of the application and the overall availability of funding support. If support is declined, learners will be expected to pay the course fee in line with this policy.
- 13.2 Where individual or employers default on a fee payment and are unable to assure us that this position will be resolved quickly we will implement a process of debt management which will restrict the learner from further activity at the College and will ultimately be passed to third parties for debt collection activities should payment not be forthcoming.

### **14 Franchise partners and sub-contractors**

- 14.1 Each approved sub-contractor contracting with NBCOL will be charged a supply-chain fee of between 20% and 30% of the SFA funding rate (either directly funded from the SFA or from the SLC) for the duration of their signed contract.
- 14.2 Where we choose to sub-contract delivery through a partner (franchise activity) we will agree with the partner, as part of the contract negotiations, the tuition fee chargeable for each course included in the agreement. We expect the partner to offer flexible payment terms for tuition fees as set out in section 5 of this policy.
- 14.3 Please refer to our separate Supply Chain Fees and Charges Policy for Sub-contractors available from our sub-contractor contracts management team.

## **15 Refunds, transfers, deferrals (non HE) and late starters**

- 15.1 In general terms, for any course of greater than two weeks duration, once a student has attended for more than two weeks the full fee is payable. This rule applies to all courses, excluding self-financing activity. Where a student withdraws within the first two weeks, or fails to start, and has paid a fee a £30 administration fee will be deducted from any refund.
- 15.2 Where a student enrolls on a course that is of a duration of two weeks or less the fee is payable up-front on enrolment.
- 15.3 Where NBCOL cancels the course, either a full refund will be given or the student given the option to transfer any payment to a future/alternative course.
- 15.4 Refunds will not be given for full cost recovery/self-financing courses save for medical reasons as described in 9.7 or where NBCOL cancels the course.
- 15.5 No refund will be initiated if classes are cancelled due to circumstances beyond our control
- 15.6 The college reserves the right to make such alterations to the described courses, fees, tutors, venues & services as may prove necessary. If a single class meeting is affected by venue closure due to exceptional circumstances out of our control no refund will apply. For ACL courses, in circumstances of tutor illness the college will, in most instances, look to provide an alternative date. Only where an alternative date cannot be arranged will a refund for that session be granted.
- 15.7 Where a student feels that there are exceptional circumstances that prevent them from continuing with their studies, usually a medical condition that was unknown at time of enrolment or a significant life event, an application to have part/all of the fee waived can be made to the VPFCS. Each case will be judged on its merits. Applications must be made within one month of the withdrawn date held on the central student records database.
- 15.8 Where a student transfers from one course to another the following apportionment of fees will be calculated: -
- 1st Term Transfer – 100% of new course
  - 2nd Term Transfer – 34% of original course + 66% of new course
  - 3rd Term Transfer – 66% of original course + 34% of new course
- 15.9 Please see 5.8.1 for HE intercalating students. FE and ACL students wishing to defer will only be considered where there is medical evidence to support the deferral request. Should the course not run in the following year the student will either be offered credit against another course or a fee refund for the fee paid at the time of their deferral.

15.10 Late starter tuition fee arrangements for all students are as follows: -

- late starters in Term 1 will be liable to pay the full year's course fees
- late starters in Term 2 will be liable to pay for two thirds of the full year's course fees
- late starters in Term 3 will be liable to pay for one third of the full year's course fees

**15.11 Please note that any administration fees charged (instalment plans/credit checks) will not be refundable.**

## **16 How do I suggest improvements / complain about this policy?**

16.1 Improvement suggestions should be made to the Vice Principal-Finance and Corporate Services.

16.2 Complaints in relation to this policy should be made in writing to the Head of Learner Services. The Head of Learner Services will use the college complaints procedure to investigate and determine the outcome of the complaint.

## **Fee Remissions and Payment Plan**

### **1. Full Payment Discount**

- 1.1 The College operates a 5% tuition fee discount on full and part time Further and Higher Education courses of longer than 10 weeks duration if the learner pays in full at the time of enrolment (to encourage full payment). The discount does not cover any separate charges related to registration, exams, equipment, materials and uniforms.
- 1.2 **This discount only applies to FE and HE level programmes (excluding students accessing the Advanced Learner Loans) for Home/EU students paying their own fees (or an employer/sponsor paying the tuition fee in full on their behalf at enrolment). The discount will not be applied to the tuition fee where an employer/sponsor requests an invoice. If a student pays their fee up-front claiming the discount and subsequently makes a successful application for financial assistance with their fee we will only support up to the discounted amount.**
- 1.3 **International student fees are not subject to any early settlement discount.**
- 1.4 **Full cost recovery/Self Financing course fees are not subject to this concession.**

### **2. Fee Remission for FE SFA funded courses**

Please refer to sections 4 to 7 of this policy.

- 2.1 **Evidence required:** Learners must provide an official benefit letter or statement, dated within the 3 months prior to enrolment, clearly showing they are still in receipt of the benefit. Alternatively, an older letter or statement, accompanied by a bank statement dated within the last 3 months which details payments of the benefit will also be accepted. Evidence must be supplied at the time of enrolment.
- 2.2 Learners must also sign a declaration which states that they are unemployed AND they wish to enter employment AND that they require skills training provided by this course to do so. This declaration will also state that if they have declared false information that NBCOL may take action to reclaim the tuition fees and any support costs provided.

### **3. Cancelled courses**

- 3.1 Where NBCOL cancels a course students will be entitled to a full refund. Where the course is expected to run at a later date students will be given the option to transfer. We will endeavour to give a minimum of 48 hours-notice
- 3.2 NBCOL will endeavour to restrict the number of cancelled courses to an absolute minimum. We cannot however guarantee that a course will run, particularly if the number of students enrolled is insufficient to make it a positive learning experience.

#### **4. Tuition/ Registration fees/ exam fees and instalment plans**

4.1 Prior to the College agreeing to an instalment plan for a learner, the college will undertake a credit check; this carries a charge of £30 that has to be paid by the student at enrolment and is non-refundable

- If a course is more than £200 and 10 weeks in duration an instalment plan of up to 3 instalments is available. For non-HE courses a deposit of 25% must be paid at enrolment followed by three equal instalments thereafter, usually commencing one month after the course start date and monthly thereafter. Where course fees are over £750 and a student can provide evidence that a 3-month instalment plan would create a barrier for them we will consider extending the plan to six months (an instalment becoming due every two months as opposed to one). In all circumstances fees have to be paid in full by the end of the course/programme. HE course fees payment details can be found in section 4.3 below for Home/EU students and section 10 of the main policy document and 4.4 below for International students.
- Equipment/materials/uniform fees are eligible for inclusion within an instalment plan. Where it is the intention that the student keeps the above they will not have title until all instalments have been paid in full.
- The first payment must be made on enrolment; the remaining payments are due on the agreed dates included on the part payment agreement from this date.
- A direct debit mandate must be completed by the learner at the time of enrolment for all instalment plans. If a direct debit instalment fails then the debt immediately becomes liable in full from the learner.
- Instalment plans are not available for companies where they are sponsoring a student/students
- If a learner withdraws, before all instalments have been received, we will still require all future instalments to be paid and will seek to recover any outstanding balance on their account.

#### **4.2 Students aged 19 and over accessing Advanced Learner Loans**

- Where a prospective student chooses to access an Advance Learner Loan and decides to pay some or all of the fees themselves then an instalment plan is available if the fee is over £200 and 10 weeks or longer in duration. In this case an instalment plan over 3 instalments is available.
- Prior to the College agreeing to an instalment plan for a learner, the college will undertake a credit check, this carries a charge of £30 that has to be paid by the student at enrolment and is non-refundable

- Where a learner has not yet applied for a learning loan or has not yet received confirmation that the SLC will be paying the fee then support will be provided by Student Financial Services to ensure that the loan is in place before the learner is enrolled.
- Where a learner withdraws from their programme and has already received a learning loan, assuming that the learner has attended for more than two weeks, the balance of any fee not met by the SLC will become payable by the student.

#### 4.3 HE Tuition Fees

- A direct debit instalment plan can be set up for all HE learners where they are unable to provide evidence from the SLC that they will be paying the College. An application request made by the learner is insufficient evidence. The learner will be liable for the fees until the SLC have confirmed they are paying.
- A direct debit instalment plan is available to learners whose fees are over £500 and more than 10 weeks in duration and for HE learners the instalment dates will fall in line with HE student loan payments – 1<sup>st</sup> November, 1<sup>st</sup> February and 1<sup>st</sup> May. The student can arrange a date beyond the first of the month through the Finance Department.
- Prior to the College agreeing to an instalment plan for a learner, the college will undertake a credit check, this carries a charge of £30 that has to be paid by the student at enrolment and is non-refundable
- In line with learner's payments from the SLC fees will be collected 1<sup>st</sup> November, 1<sup>st</sup> February and 1<sup>st</sup> May in equal instalments.
- For Part Time HE learners the same instalment plans as Part Time FE courses are available.

#### 4.4 International student fees

- 100% of course fees are payable at the time of VISA application.
- If a student is refused a VISA or fails to meet our entry criteria prior to the start of the course we will refund the amount paid minus £250 administration fee. For VISA refusals the refund request must be submitted within 30 days of the refusal and the student must provide a copy of the refusal letter. Where the student fails to meet our entry criteria we will automatically commence the refund process on confirmation that the entry criteria has not been achieved.

## 5 Employer/Sponsor payments

- 5.1 The learner is ultimately liable for their course fees.
- 5.2 If a learner's employer or sponsor is paying all or part of the fees the employer/sponsor has to complete the college sponsor form, signed by a senior responsible person of the organisation such as a Company Director. Until this is received the learner is liable for the fees and can set up instalment plans in line with this policy. In signing the sponsor form the sponsor/employer will remain liable for the fees identified on the form regardless of any change in circumstance/relationship with the student.
- 5.3 If the learner's employment circumstance changes and they are no longer employed by the company originally supplied as the sponsor, the employer/sponsor will remain liable for any outstanding fees.

## 6 Default on instalment plans/payment of fees

- 6.1 If a learner defaults on their instalment plan the college will communicate with the learner requesting payment. Initially this will be carried out by the Finance team
- 6.2 If after 7 days the learner has not paid or agreed when payment will be made the instalment plan will be cancelled and the full amount of the course will become immediately payable.
- 6.3 Curriculum managers working in collaboration with Learner Services and the Finance Team will be provided with a list of all learners who have defaulted on their payments. They will be required to work with the Finance Team, tutors and learners in collecting the fees. Meetings should be held with individual learners to provide support. Any special arrangements for payment of fees must be approved by the Finance Team.
- 6.4 Learners may be removed from the course if they fail to make payment for their course fees, accreditation of learning and certification may also be withheld. Outstanding balances may be pursued through the Small Claims Court; students will be advised that this may affect their ability to secure credit in the future. Any future enrolments will be prevented if the learner has any outstanding debt on their account.**
- 6.5 If fees are still not collected the curriculum area will incur the cost/provision of the bad debt being written off so as to reflect the true income generated by the respective area.
- 6.6 Where NBCOL incurs additional costs arising from our debt recovery procedures (referral fees to debt recovery agencies and/or legal representation costs) we will pass these costs onto the learner and seek to recover them alongside the original outstanding debt.

**6.7 Higher Education students who fail to keep up their instalment payments and consequently have outstanding fees at the completion of their studies will be refused graduation (and attendance at the Graduation Ceremony) and certificates will be withheld until such time as all outstanding balances are cleared.**