

# **FEES POLICY**

<b>Issue</b>	<b>July 2021</b>
<b>Review Date</b>	<b>June 2024</b>
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<b>Location of Policy</b>	<b>BIZ-Sharepoint/Intranet/Policies &amp; Procedures/Finance</b>

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 The Fees Policy is required to ensure a fair and consistent approach is adopted for the charging of fees to learners in the College.

1.2 In order to maintain financial viability the College will:

- Plan existing provision, by course, so that it is financially viable (where direct income at least covers direct costs and allocated overheads)
- Plan new provision, by course, so that it is financially viable within 3 years – (where direct income at least covers direct costs and allocated overheads)

The setting of fees for each course is therefore of key importance to ensure viability at course level.

1.3 There will be different fees for each course as set out in the College's Prospectus, which will be reviewed each year.

1.4 There may be different fees for individuals dependent on whether the Welsh Government will fund the individual – such as International learners or a learner of compulsory school age (any age between 5 and 16).

1.5 This policy does not cover the charging of fees to organisations for education and learning provided to their employees. Such fees will depend on demand and market forces.

## **2. Fees Policy**

2.1 The College will normally charge fees to learners for the courses it provides.

2.2 The College does not discriminate on the basis of age. Therefore fees will not be set on the basis of age other than those dictated by the Welsh Government.

2.3 Any concessions offered will therefore be offered on the basis of ability to pay as opposed to age.

2.4 The fee is a "course" fee and is not just a "tuition" fee. The course fee can cover registration, tuition, examination (excluding re-sits) and certification.

2.5 Where courses incur additional costs they should be highlighted in the prospectus and explained during enrolment and interview. Such costs can include resource costs.

2.6 The fee is for the course as a whole and is fixed. If the course hours change after the publication of the prospectus then this will need to be explained to the learners but there will be no change to the fee.

2.7 A tuition fee will not be charged in respect of full or part-time further education provided to United Kingdom learners who have finished their

compulsory school education, and who are under the age of 19 years on the 31<sup>st</sup> August preceding the start of the academic year.

- 2.8 Further, the College will not charge a tuition fee for full time further education provided to United Kingdom learners of any age (those learners studying a full time programme as defined by Welsh Government).
- 2.9 The College will charge full time further education learners a registration fee to cover:
- administration costs associated with their enrolment
  - use of the College's Learning Resource Centres
  - access to, and use of, the College's computer facilities
  - production and supply of the Student's ID card
  - processing exams
  - Contribution to running costs of NUS activities
  - Running costs of Student Union Management Group (SMUG) and activities

The full time further education registration fee is not payable by asylum seekers and refugees.

The College normally allows for one free re-sit of an examination. For further re-sits we would normally pass onto the candidate the associated fee for the examination and may include a contribution to the administration cost of holding the re-sit examination. Further information is included in the College's Examinations Policy.

- 2.10 The College will not charge a tuition fee for part time further education provided to United Kingdom learners who are under the age of 19 years on the 31<sup>st</sup> August preceding the start of the academic year, but will charge a course fee (ie for those learners who are not on a full time learning programme) which covers registration, examination (excluding re-sits), certification costs, and certain resource costs for each year of study. Such learners will also be eligible for concessions on courses that offer concessions.
- 2.11 The College will charge a course fee and certain resource costs for each year of study for part time further education to United Kingdom learners who are over the age of 19 years.
- 2.12 Where a school pupil attends a course of study outside school hours which is not connected with the learner's full-time programme at school, (e.g. enrolling on an evening class) this will be eligible for Welsh Government funding, provided he/she is over compulsory school age.
- 2.13 Where an educational institution wishes to enrol a learner of compulsory school age onto a College course, the College will charge the educational institution for the cost of that course.

- 2.14 The College does not generally enrol students under the age of 16 on to its programmes (full time or part time). Any exceptions must be approved by the Deputy Principal.
- 2.15 The College will charge further education learners who are not eligible for Welsh Government funding (such as non-UK citizens) a fee which is at least the income that would have been received from the Welsh Government together with any fee that would have been charged to a United Kingdom learner.
- 2.16 These fees will be set annually and can be obtained from the International Office.
- 2.17 The College will determine as to whether a part-time course fee, for a full time Gower College Swansea learner, will be charged on a case by case basis. Staff should contact the Director of Finance and MIS who will provide guidance on this matter.

### **3. Fees Structure**

- 3.1 Fees will be set taking into consideration any collaboration with other providers and/or other sources of funding support the individual will be able to access.
- 3.2 To improve employability skills, Basic Skills courses together with part time ESOL Skills for Life courses will be provided free.
- 3.3 GCSE Maths and GCSE English, provide the learner with key level 1 / 2 qualifications to support progression to higher levels. Concessions will usually be offered for these courses.
- 3.4 Other courses are predominately professional qualifications and leisure/recreational/non-accredited courses. These fees will be charged on a market rate basis and concessions will not usually be offered.
- 3.5 Some further education courses may be offered as part of a wider consortium or sub-contractor arrangement. The fees and concessions for these courses will be subject to the specific arrangements in place.
- 3.6.1 For full time and part time higher education courses, the College will review the level of fees to be charged on an annual basis. The College may offer bursaries to students.
- 3.6.2 If a student is thinking of leaving a HE course it is important that they seek advice at the earliest opportunity to ensure they are making their decision knowing all the implications. They must formally notify their tutor and the MIS Department immediately of their decision to withdraw or suspend their studies, confirming their last date of attendance. If applicable, they should also contact Student Finance Wales (or their Local Education Authority for continuing students) as their withdrawal may jeopardise their future

entitlement to financial support or require repayment of financial support received.

- 3.6.3 HE Fees are payable in line with the payment terms of the associated franchise university. Guidance on HE full-time student funding and fees is available on the College website.

It is the student's responsibility to ensure they have adequate funding in place before commencing studies at the College and incurring fees.

Students that do not secure support from Student Finance will be personally liable for the payment of all tuition fees.

Students will be asked to provide proof of funding at enrolment. If they are still in the process of claiming support they will be asked to provide the information required within the following 28 days. If this information is still not provided they will be invoiced in full for their fees to ensure they are aware of their fee liability to the College.

The College will offset any costs, eg resources, examination costs, it may have incurred against any refund of fees due.

The College reserves the right to offset any bursary due against any unpaid fees.

#### **4. Non Section 97 Qualifications**

- 4.1 Where learners are aged 19 & above and are not studying qualifications approved under section 97 of the Learning & Skills Act, then Welsh Government funding can only be used for the delivery and not the awarding body's assessment fees.
- 4.2 The fees (or concessionary rate fee where this is offered) for such courses must be sufficient to cover the awarding body's assessment fee (including registration and examination costs).

#### **5. Concessions**

- 5.1 Concessions will be available on certain courses (***as indicated in Section 3.2 and 3.3***) to certain learners.
- 5.2 The College offers concessions on the basis of ability to pay. Learners must be in receipt of one of the income based benefits identified below.

Universal Credit, which has replaced some of: Income Support Job Seekers Allowance Pension Credits Working Tax Credit Council Tax Benefit
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- 5.3 However, in meeting our obligations to the Welsh Government, learners under 19 will also be entitled to concessions for those courses that offer concessions.
- 5.4 Learners must provide evidence of receipt of the eligible benefit (or age or education status). Learners unable to provide valid evidence at the time of enrolment will not be eligible for concessions and must pay the full cost of the course.
- 5.5 Amendments to fees can only be approved by the Director of Finance and MIS.

## **6. Grant Support**

- 6.1 The College will promote and assist learners in applying for grant support towards fees.
- 6.2 Such grants may include, Welsh Government Learning Grants, Student Finance Wales and ReAct Funding.
- 6.3 For further information on these grants learners should contact the Student Funding Team.

## **7. Discounts and Incentives**

- 7.1 The College may offer certain discounts or incentives on certain courses to encourage early applications or stimulate demand for particular courses.
- 7.2 The type of discount or incentive will be identified and agreed by the relevant Dean of Faculty. All such discounts or incentives are to be approved by the Director of Finance and MIS.

## **8. Instalment Plans**

- 8.1 The College offers instalment plans as a facility to enable the learner to spread the cost of the course.
- 8.2 The College will continue to offer instalment plans for non-HE (which are subject to the alternative arrangements noted above) courses of £100 or over. The fees will be paid as follows:
- 50% of the fee is paid on enrolment
  - 25% of the fee is paid one month after enrolment
  - 25% of the fee is paid two months after enrolment  
(Subject to full payment one month before the end of the course)
- 8.3 A £10 administration fee is charged for any instalment plans.

- 8.4 If a learner withdraws from a class before instalment payments are due, the full cost of the course is still due and the payments will be expected to be honoured. If payment is not made on the due dates or payments are cancelled then an additional administration fee maybe charged.
- 8.5 If a course is cancelled by the College then the Faculty and MIS must inform Finance to ensure that any post-dated cheques are not presented for payment.
- 8.7 Some part-time HE courses have alternative instalment plans. Details can be obtained from the Finance Department or the College's HE Manager.

## **9. Staff Development and Staff Discount**

- 9.1 The College will actively encourage and promote staff undertaking courses in the College through both Staff Development & Staff Discount.
- 9.2 Even though some, or all, of the course may be funded by Staff Development or Staff Discount, staff must follow all the standard admissions and enrolment policies and procedures.
- 9.3 All requests for courses to be funded through Staff Development must be approved by the Staff Development prior to enrolment.
- 9.4 The level of Staff Discount will be agreed each year – the current level of discount is **£120.**
- 9.5 All staff employed by the College are entitled to the staff discount to be used against any **one** course.
- 9.6 If the cost of the course exceeds the discount then the member of staff must pay the difference at enrolment.
- 9.7 This discount does not extend to courses that Staff Development has already provided funding for.
- 9.8 The Staff Discount is also available to volunteer staff who work in the College.

## **10. Refunds**

- 10.1 If the College cancels a class or moves a group to a different day, time or venue and this is unacceptable to the learner, the course fees will be refunded. Other than these circumstances, the College will not normally refund course fees.
- 10.2 Dependent on the circumstances an administration fee may be charged for refunds.

- 10.3 **Refunds for fees (other than for cancelled or moved classes) can only be approved subject to the table below;**

***Refund Approvals***

Finance Committee over £10,000

Principal up to £10,000

Director of Finance and MIS up to £2,000

- 10.4 Refunds for cancelled or rearranged classes can also be approved by the MIS Manager.
- 10.5 The published Refunds Policy for the public is detailed in **Appendix 1.**

**11. Non Payment of Fees**

- 11.1 If fees are not paid, the College will take steps to recover the outstanding amount, which may lead to debt recovery action.
- 11.2 In the event of a third party failing to pay fees on behalf of the learner, the learner will become liable for the cost of the course.
- 11.3 Should any fees remain outstanding, the College may withhold any academic certificates, refuse to provide a reference and/or will exclude the learner from the College until such fees are repaid.

**12. International Fees**

- 12.1 A learner is only eligible for home fees if they meet the Welsh Government criteria of either being a UK citizen or if not a UK citizen (then subject to certain criteria) may be eligible if the learner:
- Is an asylum seeker
  - Is a refugee
  - Has a work related visa
  - Has settled status
  - Has pre-settled status

The guidance on eligibility is complex and is updated periodically by Welsh Government. Any prospective student who is not a UK citizen should contact the International Office or MIS department to seek guidance on their eligibility and fees.

- 12.2 Asylum seekers and refugees who have a National Asylum Support Service Application Registration Card are also eligible for home fees.
- 12.3 If someone has a limit on the amount of time that they can be in the UK and/or they have been living here for less than 3 years then they may be liable for international fees.



- 12.4 If information becomes available after a learner enrolls as a home learner, which changes their immigration status, then they may have to pay full international fees.
- 12.5 A schedule of fees payable by International learners is available from the International Office.
- 13.6 **The area of defining International Learners is complex - all possible International Learners should be referred to International Office to assess fees.**

### **13. The Welsh Language**

- 13.1 Mae Coleg Gŵyr Abertawe yn ymrwymedig i hyrwyddo'r iaith Gymraeg, yn unol â Safonau'r Iaith Gymraeg a Mesur y Gymraeg (Cymru) 2011.
- 13.2 Gower College Swansea is committed to the promotion of the Welsh language, in accordance with the Welsh Language Standards and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011.

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Refunds Policy**

Gower College Swansea is committed to actively promoting access, entry and participation on its courses by all members of the community.

Where the number of students attending a class falls to a level at which the class is no longer viable, the College retains the right to merge the class with another group or close the class if necessary.

In determining our refunds policy for students withdrawing from courses, the College has a duty to take account of course viability and our commitment to those students who reasonably expect their courses to continue for the full duration.

A full refund of a course fee will be given on request only if:

1. A course is cancelled by the College.
2. The course day, time or mode of delivery or venue is changed by the College.

### **Refunds will not normally be given in any other circumstances**

The decision to refund fees will be at the College's discretion.

Any refunds due on HE courses will be made in accordance with the relevant HEI franchising partner's policy.

Gower College Swansea reserves the right to charge an administration fee for refunds. The College will offset any costs, eg resources, examination costs, it may have incurred against any refund of fees due.

Any refund request will be considered and responded to within 4 weeks of receipt.

### **The Welsh Language**

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