



Higher Education Tuition Fee Policy 2020-2021

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 The College's stated aim is to create a safe and secure environment in which equality of opportunity, diversity of backgrounds and experiences are valued. In those areas where the College has discretion to determine fee levels, fees will be set with due regard for financial viability and market forces and the College's mission to significantly expand opportunities for university level study in the local area.
- 1.2 The College believes that it is in the interests of both the student (or student's employer or sponsor) and the College that applicants and students should be notified as early as possible of the total fees due for their courses, including any additional costs, along with arrangements for payment. Where, for reasons outside the control of the College, there is a need to increase fees previously notified to applicants and students, or to impose additional costs, the College will apply set principles to minimise the impact on students.
- 1.3 Students (or their employers or sponsors) are responsible for prompt payment. Defaults on payment are treated seriously and can lead to the application of sanctions as set out in this policy.

2. Purpose of the Policy

2.1 This policy:

- outlines how the College set its fees fairly;
- explains how students pay their fees for tuition and other charges;
- explains what happens if students withdraw or interrupt their study.

3. Aims of the Policy

3.1 The aims of this policy are:

- to present a transparent and fair fee structure that is common to all HE provision;
- to ensure that the tuition fees charged by **the College are comparable** with competitor institutions **and support** the widening of participation in higher education within the region;
- to ensure that the College operates procedures relating to tuition fees that are fair and consistent and in line with College policy and funding body requirements;
- to ensure that tuition fee rates comply with regulations as set out by the Office for Students and the College's own strategic aims and which are approved by the Corporation.

4. Scope

4.1 This policy applies to all Southport College University Centre students including full and part time students on higher education programmes of study, i.e. Higher Nationals and those awarded by the University of Cumbria and the University of Central Lancashire (UCLan).

4.2 This policy applies to students who are loan funded, self-funding or are sponsored by an employer or sponsor.

4.3 All costs that relate to items that are essential to complete the course of study will be included in tuition fees. *(NB: there may be very limited exceptions to this. Where such exceptions do apply, the additional fees payable for those courses on top of tuition fees will be made clear to students prior to application).* Tuition fees include:

- Scheduled course tuition, academic, technical and administrative support, use of course equipment and facilities;
- Course related induction activities;
- Course assessment and awards;
- Access to the College's Library Learning Centre and online resources, including wi-fi, the network and remote access to the College's virtual learning environment (VLE);
- Use of the College's estate and resources for scheduled activities and learning support
- Dissertation, project and/or essay printing and binding where the submission of printed and bound documents is a requirement for assessment of the module;
- Use of the College's technical equipment and materials identified by the course teaching team as *essential* for the completion of the course.

4.4 Costs that relate to items that are not essential to complete the course of study and are therefore optional for students are not included in tuition fees. A list of any essential costs and

optional costs for each course of study is published before the start of the application process. Any optional costs such as trips and visits will be discussed during interview.

5. Operating Principles

- 5.1 For each course of study the College will set, publish and charge tuition fees for the full duration of the course. The level of tuition fees for the full duration of each course of study will be set and published before the start of the application process. Tuition fees stated are for one academic year only (unless otherwise stated). No increase in fees will be applied for students returning to the second year of a programme of study, e.g. from Year 1 to Year 2 of a Foundation Degree.
- 5.2 The Board of Governors sets the policy by which the tuition fees payable are determined and this is undertaken on an annual basis. In determining fee levels, the College will consider nationally published guidelines.
- 5.3 The College operates common fee structures for all its full time and part time HE courses, which incorporates provision validated by partner institutions or awarded by Pearson.
- 5.4 Any proposed increase in fees beyond the published amounts will require the approval of the Board of Governors. Increases will only be permitted in exceptional circumstances to applicants where offers of a place have not yet been made by the College. Increases in tuition fees will not be made for applicants who have received offers regardless of whether the offers have been accepted. There will be no increases in tuition fees for enrolled students progressing from year 1 to year 2 of a University Centre Southport programme.
- 5.5 Where it is intended to increase fees beyond the amounts previously notified (as set out in 5.4 above) the College will:
- notify applicants as early as possible of the increased fees;
 - explain why it is necessary to increase fees;
 - consider carefully any representations made by affected applicants either as to:
 - the amount of the fee increase and or as to the timing of payment of the increased fee;
 - consider any evidence of hardship submitted by applicants and offer assistance where it reasonably can.
- 5.6 The College will ensure that the HE Tuition Fees Policy is operated fairly and consistently.
- 5.7 The College will ensure the prompt collection of tuition fees.
- 5.8 The College will develop and operate flexible procedures for the payment of fees to the benefit of students and the College.
- 5.9 When a student completes the enrolment process they become liable for the of tuition fees. The College applies a policy of calculating non-completion charges where students are unable to complete the academic session and withdraw from or suspend their studies. Full details are given in **Section 9**.
- 5.10 Where exceptional circumstances force a student to withdraw from a course, and these circumstances were unknown to the student at the point of enrolment, the student may

request a review of the tuition fee charged, and the College may request evidence to support this request.

6. Tuition Fees for 2020/21

6.1 Annual fees for higher education courses are set at:

- £6,165 for *all* full time Higher National Diplomas/Certificates, Foundation Degrees and BA Hons (Top Up) programmes;
- £3,225 for year 1 students on part time Higher National Diplomas/Certificates and Foundation Degree programmes
- £3,075 for year 2 students on part time Higher National Diplomas/Certificates and Foundation Degree programmes
- £1,075 *per module* for year 1 students on Teacher Education courses
- £1,025 *per module* for year 2 and 3 students on Teacher Education courses

7. Payment of Tuition Fees

7.1 Student Loan

- 7.1.1 Students who have taken out a loan to cover their tuition fees from the Student Loans Company must confirm that their loan has been approved in order to enrol on their course of study. Alternatively, if the loan has not been confirmed students may enrol subject to agreement to a payment instalment plan for contingency purposes.
- 7.1.2 It remains the student's own responsibility to ensure that their tuition fees are paid. If the Student Loans Company reassesses a student's eligibility such that financial support is withdrawn or reduced, the student will be personally liable for the full amount of their tuition fees.

7.2 Payment by Illegal Means

- 7.2.1 The College takes seriously any attempt to pay through illegal means and will invoke Maintaining Student Conduct Procedures in cases of fraud, use of counterfeit credit cards or other false payments. This may result in a student being disciplined and such incidents may also be reported to the Police or other authorities.

8. Failure to Pay

- 8.1 The College adopts a supportive approach to its students with regards to the collection of tuition fees. The College will take steps to obtain the payment of tuition fees and in doing so will provide assistance to students where reasonable to help them meet their financial obligations as outlined *in Section 10* (this does not include financial assistance unless otherwise specifically agreed).
- 8.2 In deciding what steps to take in respect of the payment of tuition fees and course costs, the College will consider all the circumstances of each affected student's case. Where necessary and proportionate, the College reserves the right to apply one or more of the following sanctions to any student who defaults on payment of tuition fees:
- withdrawal of library (including online resources) and computing facilities;

- termination of enrolment and withdrawal from the University;
- withholding certified transcript;
- refusal to re-enrol;
- withholding final award certificate;
- ineligibility to proceed from one stage or level of a programme to the next
- denial of attendance at awards ceremonies;
- inclusion of relevant details in any reference provided to a third party

8.3 In addition to those steps referred to in point 8.2 above, the College reserves the right to pursue and /or seek recovery of any outstanding tuition fees through the courts. The College also reserves the right to refer students' unpaid accounts to external agencies.

8.4 If an employer or sponsor fails to pay some, or all, of the tuition fee on behalf of a student, the student will become personally liable for payment of the outstanding amount on the date which it was due from their employer or the third party.

8.5 A student who fails to provide details of payment within 30 days of registration, or who is in default of a tuition fee instalment payment by 30 days, may be blocked by the College from their programme of study. While their account is blocked a student shall not be entitled to attend classes or lectures or have access to learning resource facilities. To get their account reinstated they must make contact with Student Records.

8.6 A student who has been blocked for default in the payment of a tuition fee may be re-admitted to a programme of study where either payment is made in full or sufficient information is provided and accepted regarding when and how payment will be made.

8.7 Being blocked from a programme of studies for non-payment of fees shall not be grounds for granting extensions for submission of assessments, nor may the Assessment Board treat such a block as circumstances adversely affecting student performance in assessment.

9. Tuition Fee Liability for Withdrawal or Interruption of Studies

9.1 When a student completes the enrolment process they become liable for payment of tuition fees (see Appendix I).

9.2 Before a student makes the decision to withdraw or interrupt their study it is recommended that they seek guidance and advice from Student Guidance who will be able to discuss the full financial implications for the student and help to decide which option is best for them.

9.3 Those students who withdraw or have an interruption to their studies(Appendix II) will be charged a tuition fee based on their attendance on the course in accordance with the following scale:

- Withdrawal/Interruption in **term 1**: 25% of the total annual tuition fee is charged
- Withdrawal/Interruption in **term 2**: 50% of the total annual tuition fee is charged
- Withdrawal/Interruption in **term 3**: 100% of the total annual tuition fee is charged

10. Overseas Students

10.1 The College attracts very few overseas fee paying students. The College does not sponsor overseas students and can only enrol such students who already have approval to remain in the UK and can provide the necessary evidence. Further information is available from Student Guidance via guidance@southport.ac.uk.

10.2 The fee payable will be as per those set out in section 6.

11. Further Support

11.1 This Policy should be read carefully. Students who have difficulty reading or understanding the Policy should contact Student Guidance who will take them through the policy.

11.2 Student Guidance can provide information on fees and support and can refer students to the Finance team (located next to the Information Centre) for detailed or complex queries.

11.3 Students who are encountering difficulty in paying an agreed Fee instalment on time should consult the Finance Team and seek their detailed advice and guidance. Guidance staff can provide support and assistance with this.

11.4 Students who consider this Policy has not been correctly applied in their case, or who have a concern about the accuracy of the Fee they are being charged, or the decision about the termination of their studies and cancellation of their registration with the College on financial grounds, may bring a complaint under the College's Complaints Procedure by presenting relevant evidence to support their concerns.

12. Monitoring and Review

12.1 The impact of the policy will be monitored by the Higher Education Quality Improvement Group. The policy will be reviewed annually and subject to approval by the governing board.

13. Other Relevant Documents

13.1 This Policy links with a number of other College policies, practices and documents (available on the College website) including:

- Higher Education Admissions Policy
- Equality and Diversity Policy
- MSR Academic and Conduct Procedures
- Higher Education Assessment Policy
- Higher Education Refund and Compensation Policy
- Complaints, Comments and Compliments Procedure
- Higher Education Student Protection Plan

Appendix I: Collection of Fees following Withdrawal or Interruption to Studies

1. When a student completes the enrolment process they become liable for payment of tuition fees. Students who decide to permanently withdraw from their course or who are granted an authorised interruption of studies must follow the formal process to withdraw or interrupt from studies in order to curtail their continued accrual of fee liability for the relevant registration period. Failure to do so will mean that the student continues to accrue fee liability. The withdrawal date shall be taken as being the date on the Withdrawal from
2. Those students who withdraw from or have an interruption to their studies will be charged a tuition fee based on their attendance on the course.
3. The proportion of the annual fee that the College will retain and for which the student would be liable for will be charged on a pro-rata basis as detailed below:

Withdrawal/Interruption in **term 1**: 25% of the total annual tuition fee is charged

Withdrawal/Interruption in **term 2**: 50% of the total annual tuition fee is charged

Withdrawal/Interruption in **term 3**: 100% of the total annual tuition fee is charged

Appendix II: Cancellation

1. Students will have the statutory right to cancel within 14 days from the date at which the College enrolment form was signed. Details of this process will be provided within the material information that will be provided to students prior to their course commencing.
2. In the instance of cancellation, the College will reimburse all payments received from the student (or their sponsor) within 14 days from the date of which notice of cancellation was received.
3. Should notice of cancellation be received after the statutory 14 days' period (taken from the date at which the College enrolment form was signed) then the College reserves the right to collect outstanding fees in line with Appendix I above.