

DEGREE STUDIES AT WEST SUFFOLK COLLEGE

DEGREE STUDIES TUITION FEE POLICY

Purpose To set out the framework within which West Suffolk College will set fees for 2021/22, whether paid by students, employers, sponsors, the Student Loans Company or Education and Skills Funding Agency and deals with the collection and chasing of monies due to the Institution.

Scope This policy is applicable to all new and continuing students on West Suffolk College courses unless covered by their awarding institution's policy.

Principles:

1. The fees that the College charges for the courses it provides are set each year by the Senior Executive Team (SET), taking into account the requirements of government legislation and of the funding agencies. The Finance Committee will review the Fees Policy on an annual basis and will recommend any changes to the Corporation for approval.

2. Where the government and/or funding agencies propose a change in policy which will significantly change the existing level of tuition or other fees, such changes will be reported at the earliest opportunity to the Finance Committee. Finance Committee will consider the impact on this policy and approve any changes required. Transitional arrangements may be made to minimise the risk of a significant rise in fees causing a subsequent significant decline in the level of student enrolments.

3. Course fees will be published annually usually by April each year. Course fees should include all tuition fees, assessment materials and awarding body registration and examination fees. Retakes of modules in order to continue on a course will be charged at the applicable fee in addition to the course fee. Fees for professional bodies are not included.

4. The fees are approved by OFS following submission to OFS of an 'Access Agreement' that sets out how the College will support widening participation in higher education. OFS gives its approval to fee policies for courses running a full academic year in advance i.e. fees agreed with OFS in 2019 will apply to courses in 2020/21.

5. Course tuition fees are set annually for new entrants to a HE course and would normally apply for the anticipated 'standard' duration of a student's programme. Course fees for new entrants may increase, subject to the agreement of OFS, normally in line with inflation as specified by parliament, normally using the Retail Price Index (RPI) of inflation. The expectation is that the College will not increase fees for continuing students each year.

6. Where an HE student's programme exceeds the 'standard' duration of study for reasons of academic performance, deferral or approved extenuating circumstance claims, the College reserves the right to increase tuition fees in line with its fees policy for new entrants to a course.

7. It is a requirement under consumer protection guidance that students on HE courses are made aware in advance in a clear and unambiguous way of all of the costs, such as for materials and trips, that will be incurred by studying a particular course at the College. These will be set out clearly on the relevant course and tuition fee pages of the website.

Fee Status

8. Currently, students qualifying for Home fee status generally includes those from the UK and eligible non-UK EU nationals (if you are unsure about your fee status, you should check with the relevant student finance award agency). Students from the Channel Islands and Isle of

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Men are usually classified as international students and so charged tuition fees at the international rate.

9. For more detailed information, refer to the UK Council for International Student Affairs (UKCISA) website at www.ukcisa.org.uk.

PAYMENT OF TUITION FEES

10. Students are informed of provisional fees during enrolment. Degree Studies at West Suffolk College reserves the right to amend fees charged should any errors or omissions be discovered.

11. Fees for all courses are payable annually on enrolment. Students must either:

- pay in full / pay the first instalment and set up a payment plan for the balance;
- bring a purchase order for the full amount from their employer confirming that their employer will pay their fees;
- provide proof of having applied for or confirmation of a tuition fee loan
- or sign a declaration that they are applying for an HE loan.

12. Shortly after the commencement of the course, all students and/or their sponsors will be invoiced for fees for all enrolled modules, irrespective of the semester in which the module will be studied and any additional costs. All invoices are payable to West Suffolk College within 30 days.

13. Fees may be paid by the following methods:

- Bank transfer to West Suffolk College bank account (as indicated on the invoice)
- Online via credit/debit card – Visa, MasterCard, Visa Purchasing, Maestro, Delta accepted.
- Direct Debit (Home and Home EU Students Only see 36 below)
- By post, using a cheque drawn in GBP (£ Sterling) on a British bank, made payable to “West Suffolk College”.

14. Self-funding students may opt to pay their tuition fees by Direct Debit. A West Suffolk College signed and completed direct debit mandate form should be submitted in person to the Degree Studies Office or by post to Degree Studies at West Suffolk College immediately after enrolment.

15. Payment of fees by this method will be in 9 equal monthly instalments, scheduled to ensure that the fees are fully paid by the end of June for September starters, and by the end of November for February starters.

16. Part time students studying in one semester only will have their payment period shortened as appropriate to ensure fees are fully paid by the end of the study period.

17. Students studying over 80 credits in an academic year will be invoiced full-time fees.

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18. Where there are any delays in the payments of tuition fees and where those students cannot show reasonable cause and give a satisfactory assurance as to payment, Degree Studies at West Suffolk College may determine an appropriate sanction. Sanctions may include:

- suspension of the student's IT and Library account,
- denial of the opportunity to sit examinations or to have assignments assessed;
- denial of access to other facilities:
- exclusion from further study at the College. In special circumstances a student so excluded may be readmitted on the authority of the Executive Dean on payment of all outstanding fees and debts to the College together with an administration charge.

19. Any students who owe tuition fees will not be allowed to re-register at the start of the next academic year and will not be permitted to graduate. A notification will be sent to students to inform them of the situation.

20. No degree, diploma or other qualification shall be conferred upon students who have not fulfilled their financial obligations to the College.

Fees paid by Sponsor / Employer

21. Students who are sponsored to attend a course will be required to provide a purchase order from their organisation, prior to commencing their course. The purchase order should be submitted in person to the Degree Studies Office or by post to Degree Studies at West Suffolk College.

22. If fees are only part-paid by an employer or sponsor, the balance of fees will be invoiced to the student shortly after the commencement of the course.

23. Students remain personally responsible for the payment of any additional fees in respect of trips, residentials and materials.

24. Should employers or sponsors fail to pay invoices for tuition fees, students will be held personally liable for the value of any outstanding fees.

Undergraduate Fees paid by Student Loans Company (SLC)

25. Undergraduate students who expect all or part of their fees to be paid by the SLC must apply for funding prior to each year of study.

26. Degree Studies at West Suffolk College will be notified by the SLC of students that have been approved for a tuition fee loan. The SLC will pay fees directly to Degree Studies at West Suffolk College in instalments in line with confirmed attendance dates throughout the academic year.

27. It is the student's responsibility to ensure that SLC funding is in place prior to the start of the course in each academic year. Until funding is secured tuition fees will be the personal responsibility of the student who will be chased for payment (see Credit Control below).

28. Students who are suspended or under appeal may have their funding from the SLC suspended.

REFUND OF FEES

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Withdrawal and Refunds

29. If a course is closed during the 2021/22 academic year, or provision is withdrawn by Degree Studies at West Suffolk College and a suitable alternative course is not available, then a full refund of all fees paid for the year in which the course is closed will be made.

30. Refunds resulting from closure of a course or withdrawal of provision by Degree Studies at West Suffolk College will normally be made automatically to students within 28 working days of the withdrawal of such provision.

31. In all other circumstances, students who withdraw from their course within the first two weeks of the start date of the academic programme will not be liable for any fees due and will receive a full refund of any contribution to fees paid direct to Degree Studies at West Suffolk College. It is the responsibility of the student to submit a withdrawal request form to Degree Studies at West Suffolk College prior to the end of the second week of course commencement. Failure to do so will result in withdrawal fees being charged in accordance with the liability points below.

32. Students who withdraw from their programme of studies or who have an agreed absence, after the end of the second week, remain liable for a percentage of the fees for the remaining academic year as set out below. Any students thinking of withdrawing should discuss this with their Course Leader and HE Support Tutor.

Full time students

September Start Courses

Liability point	Charge
After two weeks of the course start date	25% of total tuition fee payable
After 7 January	50% of total tuition fee payable
After 4 April	100% of total tuition fee payable

January Start Courses

Liability point	Charge
After two weeks of the course start date	25% of total tuition fee payable
After 4 April	50% of total tuition fee payable
After 22 August	100% of total tuition fee payable

Part time students

Students studying year-long modules should refer to the full-time liability points above.

Module	25% of module fee	50% of module fee	100% of module fee
Start Month			

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September	After 2 weeks of the module start date	After 2 November	After 30 November
January	After 2 weeks of the module start date	After 8 March	After 5 April

33. All students must notify Degree Studies at West Suffolk College of their confirmed withdrawal from their course. The date this is submitted will be used to calculate fee liability or determining whether a refund is due.

34. Students withdrawing or intercalating after the end of the second week, but before an application has been submitted to their relevant funding body for a tuition fee loan may not be eligible to receive any funding from the SLC and may therefore be personally liable for any fees due.

35. Degree Studies at West Suffolk College will not be liable for the refund of fees to students (or their sponsors) or any other financial penalty should classes be cancelled due to war, fire, strike, lock-out, industrial action, tempest, accident, civil disturbance, or any other cause whatsoever beyond its control.

HIGHER APPRENTICESHIPS

36. For students studying higher apprenticeships, the cost of training will be agreed between the apprentice's employer and West Suffolk College.

37. Where students withdraw or intercalate the employer will be charged tuition fees according to the individually agreed liability points detailed in the agreement between West Suffolk College and the apprenticeship employer.

38. Employers are ultimately liable for fees that are agreed with West Suffolk College in excess of the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) fee caps.

39. These fees in excess of the fee caps are not eligible to be paid out of the levy and will be invoiced directly to the employer.

40. For further information please refer to the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) apprenticeship guidance.

CREDIT CONTROL

41. West Suffolk College provides standard 30-day credit terms to students and their sponsors. All invoices generated by the College will therefore be due for payment within 30 days from the date of invoice.

42. Credit facilities will not normally be offered to International Students who will be required to pay a £3,000 deposit. The remaining balance will be invoiced upon enrolment and payable within 30 days from the date of invoice. Students requiring a visa (Tier 4) must pay their deposit before a Confirmation of Acceptance of Studies (CAS) can be issued. This deposit is refundable at the discretion of the College, less a £100 administration charge.

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43. Variation of the standard credit terms is at the sole discretion of the Head of Finance and this will normally only be considered upon receipt of a written request.

44. Undergraduate fees payable by the Student Loans Company (SLC) on behalf of students will be paid directly to the College by the SLC and when applications are approved no chase action as outlined below will apply.

45. Any debt unpaid by a sponsor will revert to the student and the student will be subject to the chase actions and sanctions outlined below.

46. Debts will be routinely chased once they fall outside of the standard West Suffolk College credit terms as outlined in paragraph 2.

47. Chase action will normally take the form of a series of standard letters or emails, together with telephone calls and other messages in the intervening periods.

48. Chase action correspondence with students will advise of the services available through Student Support, who can provide guidance and support with handling debts.

49. The Finance Department will contact the Degree Studies Office to discuss individual cases of non-payment of students' fees to ensure effective communication of all relevant information surrounding the debt. All students should keep the Finance Department informed of any circumstances that may lead to a delay in the payment of fees.

50. All debt chasing actions will be logged on the West Suffolk College finance system against the relevant account. This will include unsuccessful attempts to contact the debtor.

51. The Finance Department may exceptionally establish individual approved payment plans with self-funding students in order to clear outstanding debts over a reasonable period of time. This will be within the current academic year. Normal chase actions will cease provided that payments are received in line with the agreement, although regular statements will still be sent.

52. If a debt remains outstanding after the chasing actions outlined above, and no separate agreement has been agreed with the Finance Department, it shall be referred for an individual case review. The case review may lead to the imposition of sanctions against individual students, including:

- suspension of the student's IT and Library account;
- denial of the opportunity to sit examinations or to have assignments assessed;
- denial of access to other facilities;
- exclusion from further study at the College
- not being allowed to re-register at the start of the next academic year and being permitted to graduate;
- no degree, diploma or other qualification being conferred upon students
- referral to an external collection agency. Any costs associated with this referral will be added to the outstanding debt;
- legal action to recover the debt. Any costs associated with this action will be added to the outstanding debt.

53. A minimum of 7 working days written notice of the application of the above sanctions will be given to the student. Notice of this will also be sent to the Degree Studies Office.

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54. Employers under a Higher Apprenticeship Scheme are ultimately liable for apprentices' tuition fees in accordance with the Skills Funding Agency rules. For further information please refer to the Skills Funding Agency (SFA) guidance and the apprenticeship agreement signed between the employer and the West Suffolk College.

55. In the event of a query relating to this policy please contact the Finance Department on 01284 716281.

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