

# Further Education (FE) Fees Policy 2023-24

including Advanced Learner Loans

Date approved: 25 April 2023  
 Approved by: Corporation Board  
 Responsible Manager(s): Head of Management Information and Funding  
 Executive Lead: Vice Principal – Finance & Planning

Applicable to Staff: Yes  
 Applicable to Students: Yes  
 Accessible to general public: Yes  
 (Including clients)

## Consultation

Consultation undertaken with:		Date:
• SMT	Yes	24.03.2023
• AMT	No	
• CCMT	No	
• Students	No	
• Employee representatives ( <i>HR related policies only</i> )	NA	
• Other	NA	

*\* please delete as appropriate*

Policy review frequency, normally: annually  
*(Please delete as appropriate)*

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## 1. Scope and purpose of the policy

This policy applies to students studying eligible FE programmes at Blackpool and The Fylde College (B&FC) who are resident\* in England and who meet the funding eligibility criteria for:

- Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) funding for Young People
- Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) - Adult Education Budget
- Advanced Learner Loans

\*Learning must be taking place in England and the student must fulfil the residency requirements set out in at least one of the ESFA's published categories. See Section 2.2 for exceptions under the new legal framework for devolved adult education budgets

The policy outlines the types of charges made to students and the circumstances under which fees will be waived. A summary table can be found at Appendix A.

Other students may be eligible for reduced fees and will be considered on a case by case basis in line with current government funding rules and college policy.

### 1.1 Definitions

This document makes reference to:

- Legal Entitlement
- Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs Offer (previously the National Skills Fund offer)
- Students who are unemployed
- Full level 2 and full level 3 qualifications

Each of these terms is a specific ESFA definition as outlined below:

#### 1.1.1 Legal Entitlement

The ESFA's "Legal Entitlement" says that

- students aged 19-23 will be fully funded (i.e., will pay no tuition fees) when they study towards an ESFA-approved first full qualification at level 2 or 3;
- students aged 19+ will be fully funded (i.e., will pay no tuition fees) when they study towards an ESFA-approved qualification in English or maths up to and including level 2 (if they have not yet achieved grade 4 at GCSE in the same subject);
- students aged 19+ who have digital skills assessed at below level 1 will be fully funded (i.e., will pay no tuition fees) when they study towards an ESFA-approved essential digital skills qualification up to and including level 1

NOTE: ESFA-approved qualifications are those coded on the [Find a Learning Aim site](#) as being approved for the category in question.

#### 1.1.2 Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs Offer (previously the National Skills Fund)

As part of the Lifetime Skills Guarantee, a Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs Offer has been developed to support the UK's economic recovery by improving the job prospects of adults, primarily those who do not already hold a level 3 qualification. These will be funded from the ESFA's Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs Offer for adults.

### 1.1.3 Students who are unemployed

For purposes of funding and fees, the ESFA's definition of "unemployed" is that one or more of the following is true at the start of learning:

- Student is in receipt of Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) including those receiving National Insurance credits only
- Student is in receipt of Employment Support Allowance (ESA)
- Student is in receipt of Universal Credit *and* their take-home pay (disregarding benefits) as reported on their Universal Credit statement is less than £617 per month for individual claims (£988 for joint benefit claims)
- Student is an offender released on temporary licence (RoTL) who is studying outside a prison environment and not funded by the Ministry of Justice
- All of the following are true
  - The student is in receipt of another state benefit(s) not listed above;
  - The student's take-home pay (disregarding benefits) as recorded on their Universal Credit statement is less than £617 for individual claims (£988 for joint benefit claims);
  - The student wishes to be employed (or progress into more sustainable employment);
  - B&FC is satisfied that the learning is directly relevant to the student's employment prospects and local labour market need.

### 1.1.4 Full level 2 and full level 3 qualifications

Full level 2 is the level of attainment which is demonstrated by:

- General Certificates of Secondary Education (GCSEs) in 5 subjects, each at grade 4 (previously grade C) or above, or
- A Technical Certificate at level 2 which meets the requirements for the 16 to 19 performance tables

Full level 3 is the level of attainment which is demonstrated by:

- General Certificates of Education at advanced level (GCE A Levels) in 2 subjects
- General Certificates of Education at AS level (GCE AS Levels) in 4 subjects
- A QAA Access to Higher Education (HE) Diploma at level 3
- Technical level, or applied general qualification at level 3, which meets the requirements for the 16 to 19 performance tables

NOTE: Level 3 courses which form part of the 'Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs Offer' may not be categorised as *full* level 3.

## 2. Policy statement

Blackpool and The Fylde College sets fees for further education (FE) programmes in line with government funding policy and market intelligence in order to remain competitive whilst meeting the cost of delivery. Students are only required to pay

tuition fees for FE programmes where ESFA funding policy states they are not “fully funded” for the qualification they study. This document outlines fees payable by students for various types of provision. It applies only to students who meet the latest published ESFA eligibility criteria for [young people](#) or for [adults](#).

This document is subject to any changes made by the ESFA. In addition, eligibility of specific qualifications is subject to change. Therefore, eligibility is assessed at the point of enrolment based on latest government information.

## 2.1 16-18 students

Students who are 16-18 on 31 August in the first year of their course are classed as 16-18 years old for the purposes of FE funding.

The following students are classed as 16-18 year olds for the purposes of funding:

- Students who are 19-24 with an Education and Health Care Plan
- 19 year old students who are completing a course which they started when classed as a 16-18 year old

16-18 students are fully funded and will be charged no tuition fees.

From time to time, we may charge fees to these students for the following:

- *optional* trips and extra-curricular activities
- replacement bus passes, ID badges or photocopying cards
- books, supplies or stationery sold in B&FC retail outlets
- equipment or protective clothing available to borrow which the student chooses to purchase
- *optional* photocopying and printing
- *optional* courses which are not a mandatory part of their funded study programme
- recreational use of college leisure and sports facilities (unless course-related)
- fines for late return of library loans, misuse of lockers or other disciplinary penalties
- charges for examinations where the student
  - fails to attend classes or complete required work
  - fails to sit the examination
  - chooses to re-sit e.g., to improve a grade where the student has already achieved grade 4 (previously grade C) or higher

NOTE: deposits may be charged which are refundable upon the safe return of equipment such as locker keys

## 2.2 Adult students – general rules

Students who are 19+ on 31 August in the first year of their course are classed as adults (19+) for the purposes of funding.

The following students are classed as 16-18 year olds for the purposes of funding:

- Students who are 19-24 with an Education and Health Care Plan

- 19 year old students who are completing a course which they started when classed as a 16-18 year old

### **2.2.1 Devolved Adult Education Functions in England**

For the purposes of ESFA adult education, adult education functions have been devolved to specified combined authorities. Under those arrangements, adult FE students who live in devolved administration areas cannot be automatically funded at B&FC.

The devolved administrative regions for purposes of Adult Education Budget from August 2023 are

- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority
- Greater London Authority/Mayor of London
- Greater Manchester Combined Authority
- Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
- North of Tyne Combined Authority
- South Yorkshire Combined Authority
- Tees Valley Combined Authority
- West Midlands Combined Authority
- West of England Combined Authority
- West Yorkshire Combined Authority

### **2.2.2 Low Wage Initiative for Adults**

Full funding is available for adults who

- are eligible for co-funding according to their circumstances (See Appendix A), and
- have a gross annual salary of less than £20,319 per annum

No tuition fees will be charged to students who fall into this category provided that appropriate evidence is provided at enrolment.

## **2.3 19-23 year old students**

### **2.3.1 19-23 year olds who will pay no tuition fees (be fully funded)**

Students who are 19-23 when they commence study will be fully funded and will be charged no tuition fees for the following types of courses:

1. First Full level 2 qualifications included in the “legal entitlement” (see 1.1.1 and 1.1.4 for definitions)
2. First Full Level 3 qualifications included in the “legal entitlement” (see 1.1.1 and 1.1.4 for definitions)
3. Level 3 qualifications eligible for funding as part of the “Level 3 Free Courses for

Jobs Offer” (see 1.1.2) where the student

- a) *has not* already achieved a full level 3 qualification, or
  - b) *has* achieved a full level 3 qualification (or a level 3 qualification from the Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs Offer) before 1 April 2021 and is unemployed (see 1.1.3) or meets the criteria for the Low Wage Initiative (see 2.2.2)
4. ESFA-approved English or mathematics qualifications as part of the legal entitlement where the student has not yet achieved GCSE grade 4 (or grade C) in the subject  
NB: level of study must be higher than any level already achieved in the same subject
  5. Entry level or level 1 qualifications which support progression to *first* full level 2  
NB: excludes English, maths and English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL)
  6. Where the student has previously achieved full level 2, qualifications up to level 2 where the student is unemployed or to level 1 where the student is employed (see 1.1.3 for definition of unemployed for this purpose)
  7. Any course for which the student is eligible for co-funding (see Appendix A) *if* the student has a gross annual salary of less than £20,319 per year.

### 2.3.2 19-23 year olds who will pay full tuition fees (be unfunded)

19-23 year olds will be unfunded for the following:

- courses delivered at their workplace and relevant to their job (except where legal entitlement applies or the course is part of the Free Courses for Jobs Offer)
- <sup>a</sup> courses linked to acquisition of licences
- <sup>a</sup> qualifications which are an employer’s statutory responsibility
- courses resulting in licences to practice
- any course if they are already studying any funded course with the exception of English or maths under the legal entitlement (see 1.1.1 for definition)
- <sup>b</sup> any course if they are in custody (unless released on licence)

<sup>a</sup> some may be funded for unemployed students studying local flexibility courses

<sup>b</sup> the Ministry of Justice funds training separately for students retained in custody

19-23 year old students who wish to study qualifications in these categories must pay tuition fees. Tuition fees for these students will be equivalent to the funding rate (weighted) published by the Education & Skills Funding Agency on the [Find a Learning Aim site](#).

Fees are payable for each qualification the student undertakes.

19-23 year old students who enrol to level 3, 4, 5 or 6 qualifications may be eligible to take out an Advanced Learner Loan\*\* to meet this cost depending on course and student eligibility. Tuition fees will be charged at the full funding rate (weighted) published by the Education & Skills Funding Agency on the [Find a Learning Aim site](#).

\*\*see note on page 7

### 2.3.3 19-23 year olds who will pay reduced tuition fees (be co-funded)

In most other circumstances, 19-23 year old students will be charged 50% of the funded rate (unweighted) published by the Education & Skills Funding Agency.

Fees are payable for each qualification the student undertakes.

Any fees for equipment, trips, fines, photocopying and replacement badges are payable even when tuition fees are not. Subject to eligibility, financial help may be available.

## **2.4 24+ Students**

### **2.4.1 24+ students studying qualifications from the “Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs Offer”**

Students aged 24 or older who study a qualification from the “Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs Offer” will be fully funded by the ESFA (i.e., will be charged no tuition fees) if:

- a) they have not already achieved a full level 3 qualification, or
- b) they have already achieved a full level 3 qualification (or a level 3 qualification from the Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs Offer) and
  - i. they are unemployed (see 1.1.3) or
  - ii. they meet the criteria for the Low Wage Initiative (see 2.2.2)

### **2.4.2 24+ students who are unemployed**

Students aged 24 or older who are unemployed when they commence study will be fully funded by the ESFA and will be charged no tuition fees for:

1. ESFA-approved English or mathematics qualifications as part of the legal entitlement where the student has not yet achieved GCSE grade 4 (or grade C) in the subject  
NB: level of study must be higher than any level already achieved in the same subject
2. Approved qualifications, including ESOL, up to and including level 2 (excludes maths and non-ESOL English)
3. One qualification selected from the Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs Offer. This offer is for one qualification only and is exhausted after the full funding of one qualification from the Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs Offer.

### **2.4.3 Other 24+ students**

2.4.3.1 Students aged 24 or older who are employed and who choose to study a qualification which is not part of the “Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs Offer” will usually be charged tuition fees.

As identified above, only those studying courses in the following categories will receive free tuition (i.e., be fully funded):



- a) Level 3 courses identified as eligible for “Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs Offer” where the student
  - i. *has not* already achieved a full level 3 qualification, or
  - ii. *has* already achieved a full level 3 qualification (or a level 3 qualification from the Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs Offer) and is unemployed (see 1.1.3) or meets the criteria for the Low Wage Initiative (see 2.2.2)
- b) ESFA-approved English or mathematics qualifications as part of the legal entitlement where the student has not yet achieved GCSE grade 4 (or grade C) in the subject  
NB: level of study must be higher than any level already achieved in the same subject
- c) Courses which meet learning needs which have not yet been met and are outlined in the student’s Education Health & Care (EHC) Plan (applies only to students up to 25 years old)
- d) Any course for which the student is eligible for co-funding (see Appendix A) *if* the student has a gross annual salary of less than £20,319 per year.

2.4.3.2 Students aged 24+ who enrol to courses at entry level, level 1 or 2 will be charged 50% of the funded rate (unweighted) published by the ESFA on the [Find a Learning Aim site](#). Fees are payable for each qualification they undertake.

2.4.3.3 Students enrolling to level 3 which is not part of the Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs Offer or to a level, 4, 5 or 6 qualification may be eligible to take out an Advanced Learner Loan\*\* to help pay tuition fees. This depends on both the course and the student being eligible\*\*.

2.4.3.4 All other students aged 24+ must pay tuition fees of at least the full funding rate (weighted) published by the ESFA on the [Find a Learning Aim site](#). Additional fees may apply. All fees are payable in full for each qualification the student undertakes.

2.4.3.5 Any fees for equipment, trips, fines, photocopying and replacement badges are payable even when tuition fees are not.

\* Eligibility defined in Annex A of [ESFA funded adult education budget \(AEB\): funding rules 2023 to 2024](#)

\*\*Details in relation to advanced learner loans are available [here](#)

## 2.5 International and Other Students

For funding purposes students are classified as international students where they do not meet the specific definitions (in Education Law) of residence eligibility in the UK or EEA. In general, individuals must have right of abode or leave to remain in the UK and must have been resident in the UK for 3 years prior to enrolment. Full details can be found in the Adult Education Budget [Funding Rules](#).

Subject to specific conditions, residency eligibility also includes

- EEA and Swiss Nationals who obtained pre-settled or settled status under the EU Settlement Scheme
- Irish citizens who have been resident in the UK or Republic of Ireland for 3 years prior to the study start date (separate rules for those who have been resident in EEA or Switzerland)
- individuals and their family members supported by the Ukraine Family Scheme or the Ukraine Sponsorship Scheme (Homes for Ukraine) and those with leave to remain under the Ukraine Extension Scheme
- British Nationals evacuated from Afghanistan before 6 January 2022 or evacuated under Operation Pitting
- Individuals with discretionary leave to enter or remain
- Individuals with exceptional leave to enter or remain
- Individuals with indefinite leave to enter or remain
- Individuals with refugee status
- Individuals granted Humanitarian protection

The following may also be eligible depending on their circumstances:

- Children of Turkish workers
- Asylum seekers
- Persons granted stateless leave

Students\* who do not meet the specific definitions (in Education Law) of residence eligibility (see above) are not funded and will be charged an international fee (see [International Fees Policy](#) for more details). Latest information for international students can be found [here](#).

Students who are not classified as international students and are not eligible to be funded by the ESFA or Student Loans Company (via Advanced Learner Loans) will be charged at least the full commercial cost of the course in question. This will usually be at least the full funding rate (weighted) published by the ESFA on the [Find a Learning Aim site](#)

NOTE: For students paying commercial or international fees, fees for equipment, trips, fines, photocopying and replacement badges may be payable in addition to tuition fees.

### **3. Accountability**

The Head of Management Information & Funding (MI&F) is responsible for keeping this policy up to date and ensuring that its contents are properly communicated to the relevant B&FC colleagues.

Any variation to planned fees is at the discretion of the Vice Principal – Finance & Planning or in their absence the Principal/Chief Executive Officer (CEO).

### **4. Student Involvement**

There is no student involvement. It is a requirement and a condition of Blackpool and The Fylde College's ESFA funding agreement that the College publishes this policy.

### **5. Linked policies and procedures**

Cash and Banking Procedures

Financial Regulations and all Financial Policies and Procedures

Home Office UKVI Tier 4 Policy

International Fees Policy

International Student Fees Procedure

International Fees Policy

Late Returns and Fines Policy and Procedure

Refund Policy

Tuition Fee Payment Policy

## 6. Equality Impact Assessment

Impact Assessment for the strands of Equality, Inclusion, Safeguarding, Health and Safety and Sustainability	
Initial Form to be completed with Risk Assessments or as part of a proposal or change to a policy, plan or new way of working	
Title of Activity: Fees Policy 2023-24 for Further Education (FE) Courses including those eligible for Advanced Learner Loans Author and Date: Linda Smith, 13 Mar 2023	<input type="checkbox"/> New or <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Revision Please tick as appropriate Expected Implementation Date: Jun 2023 What is the review date? Mar 2024
<b>Equality, Diversity and Inclusion</b> Which of the characteristics maybe impacted upon? And, if yes, how has this been considered? What are the risks? What are the benefits?	Positive impact for students who are unemployed, receive low wages, have EHCPs or other barriers to learning
<b>Safeguarding:</b> Are there any aspects of this proposal which could cause a learner/member of staff/visitor to feel unsafe? If yes, how has this been considered? What are the risks? What are the benefits?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Health and Safety:</b> Have any risks been identified? If yes, how has this been considered? What are the risks? What are the benefits?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Sustainability:</b> Are there expected benefits or impacts on sustainability issues? If yes, how have these been considered?	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No
<b>Evidence:</b> What evidence do you have for your conclusions and expectations for these conclusions? How will this impact be monitored for all these considerations?	Fees set in line with government policy. Where students are deemed to be disadvantaged, B&FC will lobby to raise government awareness
Is this policy of a high/medium or low risk? :	<input type="checkbox"/> High <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Medium <input type="checkbox"/> Low

## Appendix A – 2023/24 fees payable for adults studying FE courses at B&FC

19+ YEARS OLD ON START DATE OF COURSE						
Level Enrolling To	Must be delivered as	Age	Prior Attainment Level	Unemployed in receipt of Benefits	Employed with Low Wage	Employed (Not Low Wage) or No Benefits
English and maths <a href="#">Entry Level, Level 1 &amp; 2</a>	Legal Entitlement	19+	No GCSE grade 4(C) or above	Fully Funded	Fully Funded	Fully Funded
Essential Digital Skills <a href="#">Entry Level, Level 1</a>	Legal Entitlement	19+	IT Skills below Level 1	Fully Funded	Fully Funded	Fully Funded
English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) <a href="#">Entry Level, Level 1 &amp; 2</a>	Local Flexibility	19+	N/A	Fully Funded	Fully Funded	Co-Funded
Entry Levels	Local Flexibility	19-23	Below Full Level 2	Fully Funded	Fully Funded	Fully Funded
			Full Level 2 or above	Fully Funded	Fully Funded	Co-Funded
		24+	N/A	Fully Funded	Fully Funded	Co-Funded
Level 1	Local Flexibility	19-23	Below Full Level 2	Fully Funded	Fully Funded	Fully Funded
			Full Level 2 or above	Fully Funded	Fully Funded	Co-Funded
		24+	N/A	Fully Funded	Fully Funded	Co-Funded
Level 2 not Full Level 2	Local Flexibility	19-23	Below Full Level 2	Not Funded	Not Funded	Not Funded
			Full Level 2 or above	Fully Funded	Fully Funded	Co-Funded
		24+	N/A	Fully Funded	Fully Funded	Co-Funded
Full Level 2	Legal Entitlement	19-23	Below Full Level 2	Fully Funded	Fully Funded	Fully Funded
			Full Level 2 or above	Fully Funded	Fully Funded	Co-Funded
		24+	Below Full Level 2	Fully Funded	Fully Funded	Co-Funded
			Full Level 2 or above	Fully Funded	Fully Funded	Co-Funded
Full Level 3	Legal Entitlement / Loan Funded	19-23	Below Full Level 3	Fully Funded	Fully Funded	Fully Funded
			Full Level 3 or above	Loan or Self-Funded	Loan or Self-Funded	Loan or Self-Funded
	Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs Offer	19+	Below Full Level 3	Fully Funded	Fully Funded	Fully Funded
			Full Level 3 or above	Fully Funded	Fully Funded	Loan or Self-Funded
Level 3 <a href="#">Any other Level 3 not otherwise funded</a>	Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs Offer	19+	Below Full Level 3	Fully Funded	Fully Funded	Fully Funded
			Full Level 3 or above	Fully Funded	Fully Funded	Loan or Self-Funded
	Loan Funded	19+	N/A	Loan or Self-Funded	Loan or Self-Funded	Loan or Self-Funded
Level 4 and above <a href="#">not prescribed HE</a>	Loan Funded	19+	N/A	Loan or Self-Funded	Loan or Self-Funded	Loan or Self-Funded

**NOTE:** Eligible students with a gross annual salary of less than £20,319 per year who are eligible for co-funding (according to the table above), can be fully funded on production of appropriate evidence