



WESTMINSTER ADULT EDUCATION SERVICE
FEES POLICY 2019-20

| Policy schedule | | | |
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| Lead Responsibility | Assistant Principal Business Support Services | Approved by | Resources Committee |
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| Policy applicable to | All staff and learners | | |

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1. Fees Policy 2019-20 Objectives

The purpose of this policy is to provide a framework within which Westminster Adult Education Service (WAES) is to ensure that:

- I. Fees are levied appropriately and consistently
- II. The Service is operating in accordance with the requirements of Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) funding rules and other monitoring bodies' regulations.

2. Scope

The policy applies to all courses available for learners.

3. Approval

The Fees Policy and any subsequent amendments to this policy will require the approval of the Resources Committee and the Board of Governors. The Policy will be reviewed annually*.

*WAES reserves the right to review this policy at any time.

4. Principles underpinning the policy

WAES aims for:

- I. Clarity and transparency on prices with timely publication of fees
- II. Accessible information on pricing and to the Fees Policy

WAES endeavours to ensure that all fee information released to the public is accurate.

To support equality of opportunity, WAES will provide:

- I. Information and assistance in applying for financial support for course fees
- II. Instalment payment options are available in accordance with Service procedures
- III. A range of information on funding, fees, bursary and financial support

WAES will publish and make available a fee structure annually detailing fee costs and remission categories. These are the fees that will apply to all courses; changes to these course fees may only be made with the approval of the Executive Board. The fee structure for 2019-20 is included in the policy.

Important to note: The term 'course fee' refers the tuition fee and where applicable the materials and exams fees. The term 'tuition fee' refers to the course cost only.

5. Policy Statement

WAES reserves the right to cancel any course or change its charging policy where its costs may result in a financial loss; cancel any course where there is lack of appropriate resources; and/or refuse entry to a course on any non-discriminatory grounds.

6. Learner fee definitions

6.1 Home Students

The ESFA only fund 'home students'. In all but exceptional circumstances, home students must meet the 3-year residency requirement. The student must have been legally and ordinarily a resident in the United Kingdom, or another European Union (EU) or European Economic Area (EEA) country, continuously for the 3 years prior to the commencement of learning.

6.2 Fully funded

Home students can be fully funded (pay no fees) if both their personal status and their chosen course meet the qualifying criteria. These include the learner's funding status, their age, their prior attainment, their benefits status, and the level and type of their course.

6.3 Fee remission - fully funded learners

The following categories of learners undertaking ESFA funded learning aims below Level 3, will be entitled to full funding of their fees, subject to satisfactory evidence of status being provided at enrolment and signing necessary declarations:

I. Aged 16 to 18 on the 31st August in the calendar year when the student commences a programme of study.

II. Aged 19-23 and undertaking a first full level 2, 3 or Level 4 "jumper" qualification (for this category the age at which the learner starts the learning aim applies and not their age at the start of the academic year).

III. Aged 19 and older who is unemployed undertaking a course up to Level 2 and/or is a dependant of a person in receipt of either:

- Job Seeker Allowance (JSA) or Employment Support Allowance (WRAG)
- Council Tax Benefit
- Housing Benefit
- Income Support
- Income Tax credits (applicable to dependents only)
- Working Tax Credit (applicable to dependents only)
- Universal Credit due to being unemployed and required to undertake skills training

IV. All learners without grades 9 - 1 or equivalent in GCSE English and Maths (no age restrictions apply) undertaking English and Maths up to level 2.

V. Learners aged 19-23 released in the community on a temporary licence (RoTL) and studying a course up to Level 3.

VI. Ex-British Armed Forces personnel discharged on medical grounds or having completed four or more years of service and undertaking their first full Level 2 or 3 qualification.

VII. Learners aged up to 24 and undertaking a Traineeship.

VIII. Aged 19 and older who is employed earning less than £19,890 undertaking a course up to Level 2. Learners must provide a wage slip within 3 month of the learning start date.

6.4 Co-funded Learners

Home Students over 18, studying ESFA funded learning aims below Level 3, who do not meet any of the fully funded criteria.

Some Home Students, dependent on age, benefits status and course, will be charged fees. These students are referred to as 'co-funded' because the ESFA pays the college the remainder of the full funding value. Fees for examinations and materials will be an additional charge referred to as the 'course fee'.

Tuition fee will be priced at 50% for the fully funded rate for new provision. Subject to submission of a WAES Full Cost Business Case which would require Executive Board approval.

6.5 Advanced Learner Loans

Adult learners aged 19 plus on level 3 courses onwards will be able to apply to the Student Loans Company for an Advanced Learning Loan. Advanced Learner Loans are a route for learners to fund the following types of provision regardless of the mode of study:

- I. Access to Higher Education Diploma
- II. Level 3 Certificate and Diploma
- III. Level 4 Certificate and Diploma

If the learner is awaiting confirmation of loan approval from the Student Loans Company, WAES will allow a period of a month, after which the learner will be required to pay 50% of the fees due. This will be refunded upon confirmation of the loan approval.

6.6 International learners

An international learner is one who does not qualify as a 'Home Student'. International learners are charged fees at a higher rate to reflect the full cost of their individual learning programme. International learners who do not meet the eligibility criteria of being a Home Student as per the ESFA will be charged an overseas fee which is set at £15.00 per hour, with the exception of a learner on an ESOL course, who will be charged £8.50 per hour.

6.7 Full cost provision

Fees for all full cost courses (courses that do not attract any funding) will be determined at a minimum of £8.00 per hour and are subject to market conditions. These courses can be priced in line with competitors; subject to submission of a WAES Full Cost Business Case which would require Executive Board approval. Please see section 12. *Fee Structure 2019-20*.

7. Staff discount

There will be a 20% discount for all staff (including Westminster City Council staff) on courses offered by WAES. The discount will be available for the tuition fee only. Any additional costs e.g. materials, exams etc. will be payable in full. Staff can only access the staff discount after completing their first full year of service.

8. Examination fees

Examination fees are payable with tuition fees. Learners retaking examinations may be charged the examination retake fee and an additional administration fee of £25. Where applicable this will be payable prior to the examination entry.

9. Fee Refunds procedure

This section sets out the criteria by which refunds are approved. Refunds may be considered in other exceptional circumstances; however, these cases will require Executive Board approval.

9.1 Course Cancellation

WAES will refund fees in full if we close a course in the first two weeks or cancel a course before it starts. If WAES cancels a learner's course(s) prior to start date and we are unable to provide a suitable alternative, they will be entitled to a full refund of the fees. If WAES changes a course venue, dates or times and the alternative offered is unsuitable for the learner, a full refund will be given.

9.2 Cooling off period

The 14 calendar days cooling off period commences from the day the learner is enrolled in the system, not from the start date of their course. During this period the learner will have the right to cancel the course and obtain a full refund. Once the cooling off period has expired there is no obligation on WAES to make any refund unless this is due to service failure.

9.3 Refunds relating to transfers

Learners will be able to transfer without any additional fees if this arrangement has been made by WAES. If it is by the request of the learner; they will be liable to pay any additional fees relating to the new course plus the standard charge of a £25 transfer fee. If a learner transfers to a course that is of less value, they will be refunded the difference after a deduction of a £25 transfer fee.

Payment for a course cannot be transferred to another person i.e. if a learner is unable to attend the course the course fees cannot be transferred to another person at their request.

9.4 Refunds relating to a learner's medical condition

Refunds for leaving a course due to a learner's medical condition will only be given on proof of a doctor's certificate. The learner will receive a proportional refund of the fees paid in relation to the number of classes remaining. The refund will be dealt with from the date the doctor confirms the learner's medical condition.

There will be a £25 administration charge for each refund. The learner must complete the refund application form. Any request for a refund must be made within three months from the last date of attending the course. Every refund application is assessed fairly taking into consideration appropriate documentation submitted by the learner.

9.5 Refunds for re-scheduled class

WAES occasionally has to reschedule a class due to unforeseen circumstances. Arrangements would be made to suit the majority of the class and availability of suitable accommodation. On request, the learner would be entitled to a refund in vouchers to the value of the session/s missed in circumstances where a rearranged class is not convenient for them to attend. The request must be made within 3 months of the rescheduled class.

9.6 How refund payments are made

The learner must complete a refund application form in all instances. If the learner has paid by debit or credit card, the amount due will be refunded to the card. If the learner has paid cash, the refund will be in the form of a cheque issued by Westminster City Council. The process of issuing a cheque

can take up to 28 days. WAES reserves the right of refusal to refund any learner who has a current debt with WAES.

9.7 Instalments Adult Education Budget courses (AEB) including Adult Learner Loans and Full cost courses

Payment of fees can be made by instalments for courses with tuition fees greater than £250.

For courses with tuition fees between £250 and £1,000, 50% must be paid upfront and the remaining 50% within one month.

For courses with tuition fees over £1,000 the first payment is 30% of the tuition fee + the cost of materials and exams. The remaining amount due will be split over a maximum of three consecutive monthly payments, or for courses of a shorter duration at least six weeks before the expected end date of the course.

For example, if the course is for 10 months and the tuition fee is £1200, the instalment fee will be £360 initial payment, then a monthly payment of £280 over three months (i.e. 3 – 1). If a learner wants to pay it off earlier, that can be adjusted at enrolment.

Full cost course – if the course fee is over £250, then instalment payments will be available, payable 50% upfront and 50% in one month.

9.8 Sanctions against non-payment of fees

If a learner has an outstanding debt from the previous year, this must be paid in full before enrolling on another course. If fees are due:

- I. The learner will not be re-enrolled on any further courses
- II. No refund will be given to a learner in debt with WAES
- III. Exam certificates will not be issued until debt is paid in full

The learner will not be allowed to continue the course until the debt is paid, WAES will take reasonable steps to advise and support learners in financial difficulty. If support measures are applicable, failure to pay agreed monies in line with arrangements will, in most cases, result in suspension or withdrawal from the course.

9.8 Early withdrawal from /Late Start on funded courses

All learners (including non-starters) on funded accredited courses who withdraw before the end of the course will be charged the course fee. Learners who are paying by instalments or who are funding their course by an Advanced Learner Loan will also be subject to paying the full fee at the point of withdrawal.

10. Fee Reductions

There is no reduction in fees for those learners who join a course late. The full fee applies in all circumstances.

11. Discretionary/Learner Support Fund

Learners who are unable to meet the full costs of tuition fees and meet specific eligibility criteria may be able to get assistance from the College Discretionary / Learner Support Funds. Learners can access information online: www.waes.ac.uk/services/learner-support-fund

12. Fee Structure 2019-20

| Course Type/Funding | Applicable fees |
|---|--|
| ESOL courses Adult Education Budget | £3.50p per hour. |
| Basic Skills | These are GCSE English, Maths and functional skills courses. These courses are free, as per Education and Skills Funding Agency funding rules. |
| Vocational and creative courses Adult Education Budget | Two rates will be applicable £6.50p per hour for courses that do not need extensive resources £7.50p per hour for resource intensive courses. This refers to resource Intensive Courses are Ceramics, Glass, Floristry, Fashion, Photography, Graphics, Hair/Makeup and Visual Art |
| Full Level 2 course or courses below level 2 e.g. BTEC/CACHE Diplomas etc. | Some Home Students, dependent on age, benefits status and course, will be charged fees. The tuition fee which will be approximately 50% of un-weighted funding value of the qualification studied. These students are referred to as 'co-funded', because the ESFA pays the college the remainder of the full funding value. Fees for examination and material will be an additional charge referred to as the course fee. |
| 16-18 year olds not in full time education and eligible for EFA funding | £8.00 per hour |
| Community Learning creative courses | Materials costs will also be charged where applicable. There will be no fee concessions for these courses. |

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| <p>Community Learning</p> <p>(Learners must come to a main site to be enrolled on their course so that they can be assessed for remitted fees)</p> | <p>Learners who are not on any of the benefits listed below will be charged £2.50 per hour. Materials costs will also be charged where applicable.</p> <p>The course will be free for learners receiving any of the following benefits:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobseekers Allowance • Employment and Support Allowance • Universal Credit • Working tax credit • Child Tax credit • Housing benefit • Carers & disability benefit • Income support • Pensions Credit • Other current DWP low-income benefits <p>The course will attract a 50% reduction for those learners who have a household income of less than £21,000 per annum</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proof of benefit or proof of income within the last 3 months will be required. <p>Important to note the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fees may be negotiated for courses that are offered to partner organisations for specific groups of learners. • Family learning courses will be free – there will be no charge for these. • Residents of the City of Westminster are entitled to a 10% discount on community learning courses, Current proof of residence dated within the last 3 months will be required. |
| <p>Full cost</p> | <p>These courses are charged at a minimum of £8.00 per hour based on a minimum of 15 in a class, plus the registration and materials fee.</p> <p>These courses can be priced in line with competitors; subject to submission of a WAES Full Cost Business Case which would require Executive Board approval.</p> |
| <p>International Learners</p> | <p>£15.00 per hour for all AEB courses EXCEPT</p> <p>Learners not eligible for ESFA funding on ESOL courses pay £8.50 per hour</p> |
| <p>Distance learning</p> | <p>There are no cost for home student. The cost are under review and are subject to change following Executive Board Approval</p> |
| <p>Apprenticeship</p> | <p>The provision is no fee to home student.</p> |