
Bury College Strategies, Policy, and Procedures

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BACKGROUND

This document outlines the Fees Policy of Bury College. Tuition Fees are an important part of the income that Bury College generates for the education and training it delivers.

There are a range of factors that influence the Fees Policy, in particular Government priorities and funding rules.

1. CONTEXT

This Fees Policy has been developed to reflect the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) Priorities and Funding for 2024 to 2025.

The Funding Rules emphasise priorities in specific areas:

- **16 to 18 year olds** – funding to deliver high quality study programmes offering substantial qualifications, English and Maths, and other value-added activities including work experience where appropriate, enabling students to progress to higher levels of study or skilled work.
- **Apprenticeships** – Employers pay the apprenticeship levy if they have a pay bill more than £3 million each year. They will receive funds through the apprenticeship service to spend on training and assessing apprentices. The government will add 10% to these funds and the cost of apprenticeship training is paid directly to the provider. An employer that doesn't pay the apprenticeship levy will pay 5% towards the cost of the apprenticeship. The government will pay the rest (95%) up to the funding band maximum, directly to the training provider. Employers may be eligible to receive full funding to cover the cost of apprenticeship training, plus additional support, depending on the age of the apprentice and the size of employer. All employers need to create or sign in to an apprenticeship account, to be able to get funding to pay for apprenticeship training and assessment costs.
- **English and Maths** – students have a statutory entitlement to fully funded English and maths to enable them to progress to Level 2 and achieve a GCSE in these subjects if they have not already done so.
- **First Full Level 2** – students have a statutory legal entitlement to a first full Level 2 qualification and will not pay fees.
- **First Full Level 3** – Students aged 19 to 23 studying their first full level 3 qualification from the Legal Entitlement list will be fully funded and not pay fees. This is a statutory legal entitlement.
- **Engaging Adults** – to provide the skills and learning they need to equip them for work, an apprenticeship or further learning.
- **Advanced Learner Loans** – Loans will be available to those aged 19 and above studying qualifications at levels 3 to 6, where they are not eligible for a fully funded Level 3.

2. POLICY OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this policy are:

- To provide a framework for setting tuition fees that is fair, transparent and clear.
- To ensure that tuition fees are set in accordance with government priorities and that the expectations of the funding bodies are met.
- To ensure efficiency and fairness in the fee collection procedures, and provide clarity relating to the refund policy, appeals and financial assistance.
- To ensure that the tuition fee income is optimised, whilst remaining competitive and reflecting the quality of the offer.

3. FEES STRUCTURE

Courses are available to all applicants.

It is the student's responsibility to provide information that is both accurate and complete at enrolment to ensure that correct decisions are made in relation to fees. Failure to correctly declare any information used to determine eligibility for funding may result in fees being invoiced at a later date.

3.1 Students Aged 16 to 18 (or age 19-24 with an Education Health and Care Plan) on August 31st 2024

In accordance with Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) 2024 to 2025 Funding Regulations for Post 16 Provision, Bury College does not charge tuition, registration or examination fees to students aged 16-18 (or aged 19-24 with an Education Health and Care Plan) taking full or part-time courses funded by the ESFA.

However, the Funding Regulations do allow colleges to apply reasonable conditions of attendance in order for students to qualify for free examination entry.

Bury College may charge students aged 16-18 (or age 19-24 with an Education Health and Care Plan) for examinations and resits as follows:

- where the required attendance or completion of work has not been achieved
- where the student fails without good reason to sit the examination for which the institution has paid
- where a student resits an examination resulting from an initial examination failure
- where a student resits an exam with the aim of achieving improvements in grades (unless the repeat period of study is being funded by inclusion in planned hour returns)

3.2 Students Aged 19 and over on 31st August 2024

All courses are subject to the Funding Rules issued by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) and other funding organisations.

Courses are open to applications from all age groups. However, ESFA/GMCA funding for tuition fees will only be provided in relation to specific age groups, previous achievement, home postcode and economic circumstances at the date the course commences. The ESFA/GMCA will fund 100% of the tuition fee for students who they fully fund. They will fund 50% of the tuition fee for students they co-fund. Students will be required to pay the balance of their tuition fee.

3.2.1 Entry Level and Level 1

- ESFA and GMCA will fully fund all learners that meet the definition of Unemployed, Economically Inactive or their income from employment is below £25,000, to study a qualification from the Entry Level and Level 1 local flexibilities list.
- If learners do not meet these criteria, they will be co-funded.

3.2.2. Level 2

- ESFA and GMCA will fully fund all learners that meet the definition of Unemployed, Economically Inactive or their income from employment is below £25,000.
- ESFA will fully fund learners that reside outside of Greater Manchester and are aged 19-23 who have not previously achieved a Full Level 2 qualification if they are studying a qualification from the Level 2 Legal Entitlement List.
- GMCA will fully fund Greater Manchester residents aged over 19 who have not previously achieved a Full Level 2 qualification if they are studying a qualification from the Level 2 Legal Entitlement List.

- GMCA will fully fund Greater Manchester residents aged over 19 who have not previously achieved a Level 2 qualification if they are studying a Level 2 qualification from the local flexibilities qualification list.
- If learners do not meet any of these criteria, they will be co-funded.

3.2.3 Level 3

- GMCA will fully fund Greater Manchester residents that access courses from the GMCA Combined Level 3 Approved Qualification List if they are Unemployed, Economically Inactive or their income from employment is below threshold of £32,200.
- GMCA will fully fund Greater Manchester residents that access courses from the GMCA Combined Level 3 Approved Qualification List if they are undertaking their first or second Level 3 qualification.
- ESFA will fully fund learners that reside outside of Greater Manchester who access courses from the ESFA Level 3 Free Courses for Jobs list if they are Unemployed, Economically Inactive or their income from employment is below threshold of £32,200.
- ESFA and GMCA will fully fund learners aged 19-23 who have not previously achieved a Full Level 3 qualification, if they are studying a qualification from the Level 3 Legal Entitlement List.
- If learners do not meet the criteria above for full funding, the student is required to pay the course fee in full. They may be eligible for an Advanced Learner Loan from the Student Loans Company (SLC) to pay all or part of their fees. Advanced Learner Loans will be paid directly to the College by the SLC.

3.3 ENGLISH, MATHS AND ESOL

The ESFA/GMCA will fully fund students aged 19 or older, who have not previously attained a GCSE grade 4 or higher in English and maths, to study English and maths, as part of their legal entitlement. Qualifications available include GCSE English and maths, and Functional Skills English and maths from entry to Level 2.

3.4 APPRENTICESHIP AND WORKPLACE LEARNING

3.4.1 Apprenticeship Students

- If the employers pay bill is more than £3 million, they will pay an annual apprenticeship levy, which is 0.5% of gross annual payroll, less a £15,000 allowance. Digital accounts are also topped up by 10% each month by the Government. The funds within the account can only be used to fund apprenticeships.
- Employers who do not pay the apprenticeship levy, and levy paying employers with insufficient funds, must co-invest the relevant amount of the total negotiated price, up to the funding band maximum, towards the cost of the apprenticeship training and assessment. The employer co-investment rate is 5%. Employers will be invoiced for the co-investment fee. The government will pay the remaining percentage (up to the funding band maximum). The exemptions below apply:
 - Employers who do not pay the levy, if at the start of their apprenticeship training the apprentice is aged between 16 and 21 years old.
 - Employers who do not pay the levy, if at the start of their apprenticeship training the apprentice is aged between 22 and 24 years old and has either an Education, Health and Care (EHC) plan provided by local authority and / or has been in the care of their local authority.
- Apprenticeship Standards are set within a funding band. The cost of the Apprenticeship can be negotiated within this funding band, up to the upper limit.

- Apprenticeship Fees and payment method will be agreed before the start of the apprenticeship. The college or employer must not ask an apprentice to contribute financially to the cost of their learning.
- The Employer is responsible for the payment of the costs incurred for any resits of examination or assessment including, but not limited to, End Point Assessments.

3.4.2 Workplace Learning

- The ESFA/GMCA will fully fund learning in the workplace for students who are enrolled on an approved funded regulated qualification, which is delivered at the employee's workplace. Funding eligibility criteria is outlined in section 3.2.

3.5 ELIGIBILITY FOR FUNDING

3.5.1 Most individuals will be eligible for funding if they have the Right of Abode in the UK, or they have been ordinarily resident in the UK for at least the previous three years on the first day of learning.

3.5.2 Other individuals could be eligible for funding as detailed in the ESFA/GMCA Funding Rules.

3.5.3 International students pay fees equivalent to ESFA/GMCA funding for specific qualification aims. Also, for international students, a levy may be charged to reflect any additional support provided. International student fees must be paid in full before commencement of the course.

3.6 FULL COST COURSES

The Full Cost fee will cover all direct and indirect costs plus a percentage profit, based on market demand. There are no concessions for this provision. Fees must be paid in full before commencement of the course.

Where Bury College offer a qualification that could be ESFA or GMCA or Loan funded as a commercial 'full cost' course students must be told that other providers may offer alternative funding routes.

The student is responsible for the payment of the costs incurred for any resits of examination or assessment.

3.7 HE COURSES

3.7.1 Higher Education courses will have a fee set by Bury College who will collect the fee from either the SLC, for students financing their course through a tuition loan, from the student if they are self-funding, or from their employer if applicable.

3.7.2 The majority of students will be able to access Tuition Fee loans via the Student Loans Company (SLC). If an SLC Tuition Fee Loan has not been secured prior to enrolment, the student will be invoiced on enrolment. Invoices will be credited once the student has secured the loan from the SLC.-It is the responsibility of the student to complete their Student Finance application.

3.7.3 Self-funding students can opt for the following payment plan:

3 payments:	September (25% of the total fee)
	January (25% of the total fee)
	April (50% of the total fee)

3.7.4 Students who leave in year will be expected to pay the following tuition fees either self-funded or via the Student Loans Company (SLC):

Withdrawal Date	Fee Liability
Less than 2 weeks after enrolment	Nil
Before the end of the first term	25%
Before the end of the second term	50%
After the start of the last term	100%

3.7.5 Any student who has not paid their tuition fee in full at the end of the academic year will:

- Not have assessed work marked.
- Will not be permitted to progress to the next year of study or enrol on another course at the College until the outstanding amount has been settled.
- Will not be allowed to attend the graduation ceremony.

3.7.6 For refunds and compensation please refer to the Bury College Terms and Conditions for the Provision of Higher Education Courses for Consumers and the Compliments and Complaints Policy and Procedure.

3.7.7 Students wishing to transfer to Bury College from another higher education institution (or vice versa) are advised to discuss the financial implications with both institutions before proceeding with the transfer.

Please note depending on the date of transfer into Bury College, students may still be liable for the full annual course fees even if the initial institution has claimed part liability.

Example: You transferred into Bury College to commence your course after term starts. You started in September at Institution A and attended for a short period of time after their term start date. Institution A charges 25% of your annual fee then you transfer to Institution B (Bury College) in term one – Bury College will charge you the full annual fee.

For internal transfers, course transfer dates will be aligned to students' points of engagement on both courses. The student should notify Student Finance of any change in course and fees.

3.8 L.E.A. AND SCHOOL LINKS – PRE-16 FEES

All Pre-16 courses are costed at a bespoke rate per school and is dependent on the level of additional support the school provides to its students. The costs are agreed with schools prior to commencing learning via a Service Level Agreement.

In addition to this:

3.8.1 Registration and examination costs, including re-sits, will be paid by the school.

3.8.2. Pupils withdrawing from their course prior to October half term will be charged at the pro-rata rate for the number of weeks attended up to, and including, the final date of attendance.

3.8.3 Pupils withdrawing after October half term will be charged for the full academic year.

3.8.4 Payment will be made whether or not students attend on a regular basis.

3.9 ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATED STUDENTS

Funding is drawn down from the ESFA for home educated students studying college courses. Specific eligibility criteria will apply, and these will be set out in a contract between the learner, parents/carers and the College. Prior to enrolment a College Risk Assessment will be completed.

3.10 FEES FOR COURSES PROJECT FUNDED COURSES

Bury College may secure project funding to deliver specific initiatives. Fees for such courses will be calculated as specified within the project/initiative.

3.11 TAILORED LEARNING

Fees are chargeable for Tailored Learning courses. Learners will be fully funded where they meet the criteria for fee remission for Level 1 courses, as outlined in section 3.2.1.

4. REFUND POLICY

- 4.1** A full refund will be given to a student who withdraws before the start date of a course.
- 4.2** For Full Cost Courses no refund is given after the start date. Cancellations 14 days or fewer before the start date will incur a 50% cost. Cancellations more than 14 days before the start date will incur a 10% cost (or minimum £25 fee).
- 4.3** For ESFA/GMCA funded courses of 168 days (24 weeks) or more, an application for a refund of the full course fee must be made within the first six weeks of commencement of course.
- 4.4** For ESFA/GMCA funded courses of 14 days to 167 days, an application for a refund of the full course fee must be made within the 14 days of the commencement of the course.
- 4.5** For ESFA/GMCA funded courses of less than 14 days, a refund of the full course fee will not be made if the learner has attended for 1 or more days.
- 4.6** If a student on an ESFA/GMCA funded course withdraws from the course after the threshold for a full refund as outlined above, the student will be liable for the balance of the fee to the end of the month in which they withdraw.
- 4.7** If a student has an Advanced Learner Loan it is the student and not the SLC who is liable for the full fee. If a student withdraws from the course after 6 weeks the SLC loan payments will cease.
- 4.8** Requests for refunds should be made in writing to the Planning and Funding Manager.

5. METHODS MODES AND TIMING OF PAYMENT

- 5.1** Payment can be made by cash, cheque, debit or credit card, bank transfer or through the On-Line Gateway, in full or by recurring card payment (RCP). Payment can also be made via SLC Student Loans.
- 5.2** The College will accept a letter confirming that the student's employer will pay and to subsequently invoice the employer.
- 5.3** Payment by instalment is permitted by setting up an online recurring card payment plan (RCP) at the time of enrolment with the exception of Full Cost courses.
- 5.4** Full Cost course fees must be paid in full prior to the commencement of the course in all instances.
- 5.5** Higher Education students. Please refer to Section 3.7 above.
- 5.6** The Consumer Contracts Regulations 2015 will be fulfilled by the College where appropriate, i.e. where contract is made without any face-to-face contact between the College and Student.

6. ADDITIONAL COURSE COSTS

There may be additional costs on some courses associated with obligatory residenceals and/or the purchase of specialist clothing and/or equipment. These will be fully explained prior to commencement of the course.

Where clothing and equipment is necessary for a student's health and safety, a charge will only be made if the student retains such clothing or equipment. If an ESFA/GMCA fully funded student does not wish to retain clothing and equipment the student may borrow the clothing or equipment free of charge.

7. FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

Students can enquire at Student Services regarding all forms of funding that they are entitled to receive to support their studies.

8. OUTSTANDING FEES

Any student who has not paid their fees, set up a payment plan or applied for a Loan by the invoice due date (7 days from receipt of invoice), may be withdrawn from their course of study.

Any student, who has fees outstanding from a previous year, may not be allowed to enrol until the outstanding amount has been settled.

In addition, exam certificates may not be applied for, references may not be issued, and the College may take legal action if the debt remains outstanding.

9. APPEALS PROCEDURE

In exceptional circumstances, a student has recourse to appeal to the Vice Principal Finance & Corporate Resources to waive or refund fees.

10. EQUALITY ANALYSIS

The College is required to follow the funding methodology prescribed by the ESFA and GMCA. This has age and circumstance related conditions which may negatively impact on the student.

For anyone excluded from free/reduced fees on the basis of age, home postcode or circumstance as a result of national guidance, the same provision is available but at an increased fee based on actual cost of providing the service. Advanced Learner Loans may be available for this provision.