

Fees and Refunds

Policy 2025/26

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Impact Assessment Status: In preparing the Policy, any potential disproportionate impact it might have upon individuals with protected characteristics, as defined in the Equality Act 2010, have been carefully considered. It is the conclusion of the College Group that the Policy does not adversely impact on individuals with any of the protected characteristics.

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Aim

The Fees and Refunds Policy aims to ensure that:

- Students are aware of the college's fees and refunds policy and the implications on fees and any financial liability when withdrawing from a course.
- Students are aware of any financial liability of not attending exams or taking resits.
- Fees and refunds are applied consistently, with any refunds to students being applied in a timely manner.

Scope

This policy and associated operating procedures apply to Chesterfield College, which includes our subsidiary companies: Training Services 2000 Ltd, Learning Unlimited ATA Ltd, Recruit Unlimited Ltd and Chesterfield College Enterprises Ltd.

The policy covers all fees relating to enrolments for the academic year 2025/26, future years may be subject to change. Refunds relating to academic years before 2025/26 will be considered in relation to the fees policy of the year in which enrolment occurred.

The framework for setting all tuition and exam fees is approved by the college's Corporation on an annual basis, in accordance with external regulatory requirements as applicable.

All provision is subject to eligibility criteria (including residency), which is set out by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) or equivalent and, for Higher Education provision, the Office for Students. For further advice on any aspect of this policy or its application, please contact the Enrolment Team.

The college reserves the right to amend this policy within the academic year, subject to changes in funding guidance and methodology.

Policy Statements – Classroom Based Provision - 16–18-year-olds

All study programmes for 16-18-year-old students are fully funded by the government, subject to meeting the eligibility criteria set out by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) or equivalent, including residency. This also applies to 19-24-year-olds who have a valid Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) in place.

There may be charges made for specific items, such as materials, uniform, and trips, which students will be advised of. Financial assistance may be available (subject to criteria) through the college's Bursary Fund – please contact Student and Apprentice Services for advice.

Policy Statements – Classroom Based Provision - Adults

The level of funding contribution provided by the government is dependent on age, level, type of qualification, prior level of qualification that has been achieved, and the student's earnings level.

The table below explains when fees will and won't be payable:

Provision/Qualification Type	Notes/Status	Aged 19-23	Aged 24+
English and Maths up to and including Level 2 (including GCSEs) where a GCSE at grade 4 (grade C) or above has not already been achieved	Delivered as part of the legal entitlement	No fees	No fees
Essential Digital Skills qualifications up to and including Level 1	Delivered as part of the legal entitlement	No fees	No fees
First Full Level 2	Delivered as part of the legal entitlement	No fees	Refer to "Learning aims up to and including Level 2, including ESOL (Entry Level, Level 1, and Level 2)"
Learning aims up to and including Level 2, including ESOL (Entry Level, Level 1, and Level 2)	Student meets the earnings threshold criteria	No fees	No fees
Learning aims up to and including Level 2, including ESOL (Entry Level, Level 1, and Level 2)	Student does not meet the earnings threshold criteria	Fees payable	Fees payable
First Full Level 3	Delivered as part of the legal entitlement	No fees	Refer to "Level 3 – qualification on Free Courses for Jobs list"
Level 3 – qualification on Free Courses for Jobs list	Student meets the earnings threshold criteria	No fees	No fees
Level 3 – qualification on Free Courses for Jobs list	Student does not meet the earnings threshold criteria	Loan funded	Loan funded
Level 3 qualification not on Free Courses for Jobs list		Loan funded	Loan funded

The **earnings threshold** is defined by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) or equivalent and is assessed at enrolment through review of appropriate evidence of monthly or annual earnings. For 2025/26, students who are unemployed, self-employed, or employed and earn **below £25,000 annual gross salary** will meet the earnings threshold criteria and will not be required to pay tuition fees on eligible courses. The college must see evidence of the student's gross annual wage, which could be a wage slip or Universal Credit statement dated

within 3 months of the start of learning, or an employment contract which confirms earnings levels. This list is not exhaustive and other forms of evidence can be discussed with the Enrolment Team. Failure to produce this information will result in the full course fee being charged to the student for payment.

No fees – the qualification will be paid for in full by the government and students will not be required to pay a tuition fee. Students may be asked to pay additional fees for materials, uniform, and trips, and will need to pay for any exam resits. In certain circumstances there may be some financial support available to contribute towards these additional fees, please contact Student and Apprentice Services for advice.

Fees payable – the government will contribute a proportion of the cost of the qualification. The tuition fees published will be the proportion required to be funded by the student. In certain circumstances there may be financial support available to contribute towards the tuition fee – please contact Student and Apprentice Services for advice.

Loan funded – no government contribution is available regardless of employment status. The qualification must be fully funded by the student by either taking out a loan through the Student Loans Company/Student Finance England or self-funding by the student or their employer. It should be noted that Higher Education students may apply for both a loan for tuition fees and a loan for maintenance and one is not an entitlement to the other. Maintenance loans are not available for courses funded by an Advanced Learner Loan. For further details of loans please see the 'Advanced Learner Loans' and 'Higher Education Courses' sections below.

Any courses falling outside of these categories will be classed as 'Commercial', meaning there is no government contribution or loan available to assist with the cost of tuition and therefore the full cost of the course must be met by the student or their employer.

Fees and Credit Terms

Tuition and examination fees must be paid at the point of enrolment. For fees over £100 the student can enter a payment plan with the college.

Payment plans will be agreed with the Finance Team and based on a 25% initial payment, followed by either six equal instalments for a course longer than six months or, for a course less than six months in length, equal instalments over the life of the course.

Payment plans outside of the above need to be requested in writing or via email to the Assistant Principal Finance, IT and Estates prior to enrolment onto the course.

Where a payment plan is agreed, the student will be liable for any unpaid fees not credited according to the refund policy, even if they withdraw from the course.

Where an employer is paying a fee, the student must provide a purchase order or a letter of confirmation from the employer at the time of enrolment and the employer will be invoiced for the relevant fees. Where an employer is paying, the employer will be liable for any unpaid fees not credited according to the refund policy if the student withdraws from the course or leaves their employment.

Where a student is taking out a Higher Education Loan via Student Finance England or an Advanced Learner Loan via the Student Loans Company, students should bring with them confirmation of the loan when they enrol. If confirmation cannot be provided at the point of enrolment the student will have 28 days to provide this information. If the loan confirmation has not been provided after this point the student will be invoiced for the course fees in full.

Where a student has taken out a Higher Education Loan via Student Finance England or an Advanced Learner Loan via the Student Loans Company for a course, and withdraws after 14 calendar days, the student will be liable for any payments made by the Student Loans Company/Student Finance England for their studies.

Any fees referred to the college's debt recovery agents will be subject to a surcharge of 15% to cover collection costs incurred. This surcharge, together with all other charges and legal fees incurred, will be the responsibility of the student or employer and will be legally enforceable.

The college reserves the right to apply additional tuition fees for those students who exceed the programme length. These fees will cover the additional cost of tuition and/or examination resulting from an extended programme length.

Local Fee Remissions

Students who are aged 19 or over and are enrolling to linked additional qualifications as part of their study programme will not be charged a tuition fee if one would otherwise have been payable. However, such students will still be liable for the fees payable for their main qualification.

The college recognises that there may be exceptional circumstances in which a certain level of discretion may need to be exercised in terms of tuition fees and other charges, in particular because of market forces. In such cases, the Assistant Principal Finance, IT and Estates should be contacted for consent to revise relevant fees. It is not expected that any such request will be made on the basis that a student is unable to pay their fees.

Funded Course Tuition Fee Refunds

This applies to Adult Skills funded courses where the student has paid a tuition fee.

Where the college cancels a course, a full refund will be provided where no suitable alternative can be offered.

Where a student chooses to cancel their place on a course, fails to attend, or wishes to leave part way through the course, their entitlement to a refund of fees paid will depend on the length of the programme and attendance.

Other Costs

Some courses may incur additional costs for materials, trips, visits, and uniform. The curriculum area will inform students of these costs.

Some financial assistance may be available subject to certain criteria – please contact Student and Apprentice Services for further information.

Policy Statements – Advanced Learner Loans

Payment of Fees

Students who are aged 19 or over when they start their learning (start date), enrol onto a Level 3 or above programme (which is eligible for an Advanced Learner Loan) and already have prior attainment at Level 3 or above, can apply for an Advanced Learner Loan (subject to assessment by the Student Loans Company).

The college is not entitled to claim any government funding towards classroom-based provision at Level 3 or above where a student is 19 years or older and already has a Level 3 qualification (unless the qualification **and** student is fundable via the Free Courses for Jobs scheme – see page 4). Students must fund their studies in full either via an Advanced Learner Loan or by self-funding. It is the student's responsibility to seek any independent financial advice; this cannot be provided by the college.

Students wanting to take out an Advanced Learner Loan to fund their studies will be provided with a 'learning and funding information letter' by the college, detailing all the necessary information required to make an application.

Students must make their own application via the Student Loans Company. Students should bring confirmation of their successful loan application with them to enrol on the course.

The college will confirm attendance for each student to the Student Loans Company two weeks after the start date of the course. At this point the student becomes liable for repayment of the loan. Continued attendance is confirmed to the Student Loans Company at intervals through the course.

Pre-Two-Week Confirmation of Attendance

A student is entitled to cancel their loan at any point prior to starting their course. The student is responsible for cancelling the loan via the Student Loans Company.

Any student wishing to cancel their enrolment or withdraw from the course within the first two weeks must notify the Enrolment Team in writing (letter or email) before or within 14 days of their start date.

In cases where a student or employer pays the full cost of a course eligible for a loan, refunds will be considered according to the policy for commercial courses (see 'Commercial Provision' section below).

Post-Two-Week Confirmation of Attendance

Once two weeks' attendance has been confirmed the student will be liable for the monthly loan repayment up to the point of withdrawal.

Where a student has taken out an Advanced Learner Loan via the Student Loans Company for a course, and withdraws after 14 calendar days, the student will be liable for any payments made by the Student Loans Company for their studies.

In cases where a student or employer pays the full cost of a course eligible for a loan, refunds will be considered according to the policy for commercial courses (see 'Commercial Provision' section below).

Policy Statements – Higher Education Courses

Payment of Fees

Higher Education course tuition fees are payable per year of study. When a student first enrolls, they will only be charged for the first year of study and will then be charged each subsequent year before the start of the returning academic year.

Fees can be paid by either the student obtaining a loan with Student Finance England, or self-financing, or via an employer (students must provide a purchase order or a letter of confirmation from their employer at the time of enrolment).

Pre-Two-Week Confirmation of Attendance

A student is entitled to cancel their loan at any point prior to starting their course. The student is responsible for cancelling the loan with Student Finance England.

Any student wishing to cancel their enrolment or withdraw from the course within the first two weeks must notify the Enrolment Team in writing (letter or email) before or within 14 days of their start date.

In cases where a student or employer pays the full cost of a course eligible for a loan, refunds will be considered according to the policy for commercial courses (see 'Commercial Provision' section below).

Post-Two-Week Confirmation of Attendance

Once two weeks' attendance has been confirmed the student will be liable for the loan repayment up to the point of withdrawal as follows:

- Term 1 – after 2 weeks of attendance, the student will be liable for 25% of the loan value.
- Term 2 – after 1 attendance, the student will be liable for the next 25% of the loan value.
- Term 3 – after 1 attendance, the student will be liable for the final 50% of the loan value.

Students who enrol onto a course considered higher provision (part-time or full-time Foundation Degree, Higher National Certificate (HNC), Higher National Diploma (HND), Level 6, or Post-Graduate) are responsible to obtain the funding to pay for fees. If the course is eligible for tuition fee loans the student is responsible for making their own application to Student Finance England. The college will confirm attendance to Student Finance England for each student two weeks after the start date of their course subject to evidence of engagement. At this point the student is responsible for any monies released by Student Finance England to the college as an instalment towards fees.

The student is responsible for their own maintenance funds to support them whilst study is undertaken, whether the course attracts maintenance funds or not.

Policy Statements – Apprenticeship Fees (Payable by Employers)

Apprenticeship fees will be detailed in the Charges Schedule signed during the onboarding process. All fees are required to be paid on receipt of invoice.

Payment plans can be put in place and need to be requested in writing (letter or email) to the Finance Manager.

Any fees referred to the college's debt recovery agents will be subject to a surcharge of 15% to cover collection costs incurred. This surcharge, together with all other charges and legal fees incurred, will be the responsibility of the employer and will be legally enforceable.

Where non-payment of fees results in the college being unable to claim the funding due from the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) or equivalent, the college reserves the right to invoice the employer for the full sum of funding lost. This will be a condition of contracting with the college to deliver the apprenticeship.

Apprenticeship Refunds

If an apprentice leaves without completing their apprenticeship a refund will be issued for a proportion of any co-investment paid based on the length of time the apprentice has been on programme. The value of the refund to be repaid is based on the number of days the apprentice has been on programme and is calculated from the start date of the apprenticeship (as per the Apprenticeship Agreement) to the last evidenced date of learning.

The last date of learning, including the apprenticeship programme learning aim, is the date the college has evidence the apprentice was still in active learning for any learning that was part of their apprenticeship (progress review, evidenced off-the-job training, or evidenced English and maths training).

When a change of circumstance results in over-payment of funds from an employer's Apprenticeship Service account or government-employer co-investment, any over-payment will be repaid to the employer. Apprenticeship Service account corrections can only be applied within the same academic year.

Policy Statements – Commercial Provision

Courses offered by the college which do not attract public funding or an entitlement to a government loan, and in cases where an individual or employer opts to pay the cost of training rather than take out a loan, are offered on a commercial basis.

Fees relating to commercial courses must be paid in full before the commencement of the course unless a specific payment plan has been agreed.

For fees over £100 a student can enter a payment plan with the college.

Payment plans will be agreed with the Finance Team and based on a 25% initial payment, followed by either six equal instalments for a course longer than six months or, for a course less than six months in length, equal instalments over the life of the course.

Payment plans outside of the above need to be requested in writing or via email to the Assistant Principal Finance, IT and Estates prior to enrolment on the course.

Where a payment plan is agreed, the student will be liable for any unpaid fees not credited according to the refund policy, even if they withdraw from the course.

Where an employer is paying a fee, the student must provide a purchase order or a letter of confirmation from their employer at the time of enrolment and the employer will be invoiced for the relevant fees.

Where an employer is paying, the employer will be liable for any unpaid fees not credited according to the refund policy if the student withdraws from the course or leaves their employment.

Refunds for Commercial Provision

Where the college cancels a class, or cannot provide the agreed commercial training, the college will offer a full refund where no suitable alternative can be offered.

Where a student chooses to cancel their place on a course, fails to attend, or wishes to leave part way through the course, their entitlement to a refund of fees paid will depend on the length of the programme and attendance.

No refunds will be offered for cancellation, non-attendance, or withdrawal from a course with a duration of 12 weeks or less.

Partial refunds for cancellation, non-attendance, or withdrawal from courses of more than 12 weeks duration will be considered when requested in writing and taking into account the period of attendance on the course.

For students who are enrolled onto Higher Education courses and Level 3 and above courses which are eligible for Advanced Learner Loans, and where the student or employer has self-funded, partial refunds will be calculated on the same basis as if a loan agreement had been entered into.

Where possible, and at its sole discretion, the college will seek to transfer course bookings to a suitable alternative date or location on request, provided that any such request is made at least two weeks prior to the planned start date of the course booked. Any requests for refunds must be submitted in writing to the Assistant Principal Finance, IT and Estates.

Any student withdrawn for disciplinary reasons would not be eligible for a refund.

Policy Statements – Examination Fees

Non-Attendance at Examination and Exam Resits

It is expected that students will pay for the cost of entry to re-sit examinations and/or assessments. Students will be charged at the point a resit is booked by a member of staff. The resit fee for each exam will be the examination fee set by the relevant Awarding Body.

Circumstances where a student will be charged include, but are not limited to the following:

- Where examinations/assessments have been failed.
- Where a student is absent from the initial examination/assessment without good reason.
- Where a student wishes to obtain a higher grade than the one achieved.

Students will **not** be charged to re-sit GCSE English and/or Mathematics if they are continuing to work towards obtaining a grade 4 or higher.

For apprentices requiring a second or subsequent resit for any examination related to a qualification they are enrolled to, including End-Point Assessment, charges will be made at cost plus a £50 administration fee to the employer. For non-mandatory qualifications that are not part of the apprenticeship standard, all fees are payable as commercial courses.

Refund of Examination Fees

Once examination and/or registration fees have been made to the Awarding Body a refund for the fees cannot be made under any circumstances. This applies regardless of attendance.

Policy Statements – Refunds Arising from Complaints

Complaints relating to courses are subject to the college's Complaints and Compliments Policy and Procedures (CSE06). Please refer to this policy for further details.

A refund request due to exceptional circumstances should be addressed to the Assistant Principal Finance, IT and Estates (letter or email) with any supporting evidence. All requests will be considered on an individual basis and a decision made within 14 days of receipt.

Refund Requests

Requests for refunds of fees paid should be made in writing and addressed to the Assistant Principal Finance, IT and Estates. If approved, payment will be refunded directly to the credit/debit card used to make the original payment or refunded via bank transfer.

Email: finance-sales@chesterfield.ac.uk

Assistant Principal Finance, IT and Estates
Chesterfield College
Infirmary Road
Chesterfield
S41 7NG

Implementation

The Fees and Refunds Policy will be applied to all courses at the point of design, approval, and offer. Students will be provided with clear information when they enquire and/or apply for courses, and as part of the terms and conditions of enrolment.

Fees may only be discounted, waived, or refunded at the discretion of the Assistant Principal Finance, IT and Estates, who will be responsible for the fair and consistent application of such discretion.

Communication Flow

The Fees and Refunds Policy document is available for students, staff, and employers to view on the college website. Fees advice will be provided by the Enrolment Team at open evenings and enrolment.

Any queries relating to fees or charges should be directed to the Enrolment Team in the first instance, either by visiting the office, by phone, or email at enrolment@chesterfield.ac.uk.

Monitoring

College staff, including the Enrolment Team, Student and Apprentice Services, and the Finance Team will ensure the policy is fully implemented. Fees will be recorded in the college's Management Information System for each enrolment. Refunds will be managed by the Enrolment and Finance Teams, who will ensure the policy is adhered to. Any outstanding fees will be followed up by the Finance Team, and where necessary will be referred to the college's external debt collection agency.

Associated Information and Guidance

Further guidance relating to fees and funding for education can be found below:

- Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Adult Skills Fund funding rules: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/adult-skills-fund-funding-rules-for-2024-to-2025/adult-skills-fund-funding-rules-2024-to-2025>
- Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Apprenticeship funding rules: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/apprenticeship-funding-rules>
- Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) Young People (16-19) funding guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/16-to-19-education-funding-guidance>
- Advanced Learner Loan funding rules: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/advanced-learner-loans-funding-rules-2024-to-2025>
- Higher Education Loan guidance: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/student-loans-a-guide-to-terms-and-conditions>

Related Chesterfield College Group Policies and Documents

- Discretionary Learner Support Fund and Bursary Policy (FIN07)
- Higher Education Bursary Policy (FIN08)
- Complaints and Compliments Policy and Procedures (CSE06)