

Academic Year: 2020/21**Target Audience:** All staff**Summary of Contents:**

Fees Policy
Fees Schedule: Appendix A
Concessions Schedule: Appendix B
Payment of Fees Schedule: Appendix C

Enquiries: Any enquiries about the contents of this document should be addressed to: -

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CMT: 11 June 2020

Governing Body: 14th November
2019**Policy Number:** 060-2019**Created:** November 2019**Related Documents:**

SERC College Development Plan
SERC Admissions Policy
SERC Student Financial Support SOP
DfE Management Statement/Financial
Memorandum
DEL Circulars FE 09/00, FE 13/01, FE
03/02, FE 14/12 and Addendums,
FE 15/12 and FE 03/03.

**Superseded Documents (if
applicable):**

Fees Policy 2018/19

**Equality of Opportunity and Good
Relations Screening Information
(Section 75):**Date Policy Screened – November
2017

SERC Fees Policy 2020/21

1.0 Purpose

- 1.1 The College is not fully funded by the Department for the Economy (DfE) for all its education programmes and training activities. The shortfall in income required to fund its recurrent expenditure is recovered by levying appropriate fees and charges payable by students, customers and users of its services.
- 1.2 Fees and charges are therefore an important source of income to the College, without which it would not be able to deliver the range of programmes, attract and retain high quality staff and invest in resources necessary to facilitate learning.
- 1.3 The purpose of this policy is to establish guidelines by which fees and charges may be levied for the provision of appropriate educational services. The College will therefore be able to recoup a reasonable proportion of expenditure while acting in a fair and equitable manner towards existing and prospective students and other customers.

2.0 Scope

- 2.1 The process of setting fees and charges shall take into account all relevant direct costs and overheads and will take into consideration market forces, the College Development Plan, target market, competitor analysis, skill shortages and other relevant factors such as equality issues and the prevailing economic climate.
- 2.2 Fees and charges will be reviewed annually and the underlying financial objective will be to achieve full economic recovery for services provided to an external organisation or customer.
- 2.3 This policy is restricted to those services where the College has discretion in the levying of charges. Therefore, the policy does not apply to the following:
 - Any subsidies, bursaries or exemptions as offered by the Department for the Economy (DfE), any other government agency or private benefactor
 - Examination fees as charged by Awarding Bodies
 - Financial support packages for students
 - Loans as made available from the Student Loan Company, or other equivalent authority
 - Grants as made available from the Student Loan Company or Education Authority or other equivalent authority
 - Those tuition fees established by external bodies, such as a university

Tuition fees apply to the financial year beginning 1 August and ending on 31 July.

3.0 Definitions

In this policy the following definitions apply:

Home Student	<p>A home student is one complying with the residency criteria laid down by the Department for the Economy as per Circular FE 14/12 “<i>Further Education residency and funding requirements</i>”.</p> <p>For the purposes of Higher Education fees, a home student is a resident of either NI or another EU country, excluding England & Wales and Scotland.</p>
International Student	<p>An ‘international’ student is one who does not satisfy the conditions for consideration as a ‘home’ student laid down by the Department for the Economy as per Circular FE 14/12 “<i>Further Education residency and funding requirements</i>”.</p> <p>The term <i>International Students</i> refers to those from <u>outside</u> the EU member states (and also including Iceland, Norway and Liechtenstein) who <u>do not</u> have UK/EU residency status.</p>
Accredited Course	<p>Courses as defined on the Register of Regulated Qualifications (RRQ) and the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF) and the Prescribed List of Accredited Qualifications (PLAQ) as defined by the Department for the Economy (DfE), or other courses approved by DfE including university validated courses.</p>

The College reserves the right to amend the definition of “Home” student or “International” student if new guidance is issued from DfE in regards to the UK leaving the European Union.

4.0 Fee Rates

- 4.1 The fee for each category of course is included in the annual Fees Schedule. The 2020/21 Fee Schedule is attached in Appendix A. The fee is not reduced for late entry onto a course. Fees are chargeable in each year of study.
- 4.2 The College reserves the right to introduce bursaries, offer concessions and vary rates within the Fees Schedule during the financial year. Rates will be varied only in limited circumstances, such as an increase in line with inflation. All students will be informed, in a durable manner, at the earliest opportunity of any rate change.
- 4.3 The College reserves the right to vary the price charged and the concessions applied from course to course in the financial year. Approval for variations must be granted, in advance, from the Chief Finance Officer.
- 4.4 The schedule of fees and charges does not apply to any pro-rata rates that will be applied for students repeating individual modules.

5.0 Concessions & Discounts

- 5.1 Tuition fee concessions are made available by the College to individual self-paying students for a range of accredited courses and are applicable to **part-time study only**.
- 5.2 The schedule of those who currently qualify for concessionary rates is shown in the Concessions Schedule (Appendix B).
- 5.3 Concessionary rules are applied according to the status of the student at time of enrolment.
- 5.4 The College offers a number of discounts shown in Appendix B.

6.0 Payment of fees

- 6.1 Details on methods of paying fees are in the Payment of Fees Schedule (Appendix C).
- 6.2 Exceptions to the arrangements for the payment of fees will be considered only in very extraordinary circumstances with the advance authorisation of the Financial Controller.

7.0 Refunds

- 7.1 The College will make every effort to run courses and programmes which are advertised. All courses are, however, required to have a viable number of enrolled students in order to contribute to operating costs. In some circumstances classes may be combined to achieve viability.
- 7.2 However, the College regrets that classes may have to be cancelled due to lack of demand. Any changes to classes will be communicated to students in line with the Terms and Conditions.
- 7.3 For any course cancelled by SERC, a full refund of the total fee paid to date will be issued to the student, unless other exceptional circumstances prevail (e.g. transfer of course or outstanding fees for other courses).
- 7.4 As a general rule the College does not offer refunds, although there is some discretion in exceptional circumstances as outlined in the **Fees Refund and Waiver SOP**.

8.0 Customer enquiries

- 8.1 Any enquiries from customers relating to the Fees Policy should be directed to the Senior Customer Services Officers in the first instance via email info@serc.ac.uk.

9.0 Responsible Owner

- 9.1 The Responsible Owner of this Policy is the Chief Finance Officer.

10.0 Communication

- 10.1 This Policy will be communicated to staff via the Learning Engine on the Intranet and made available to any customer upon request.
- 10.2 This document can be made available in alternative formats upon request.

APPENDIX A - FEES SCHEDULE 2020/21

Please note that fees quoted are payable in each year of study. The rate for year one students progressing to year two will not be increased.

ACCREDITED COURSES

FULL TIME COURSES (HOME STUDENTS INCLUDING EU)

Full Time Courses		Fee
Higher Education	Specified Courses (Degree, Foundation Degree, HND and HNC)	£2,500 <i>(Full Fee incl Tuition Fee & Exam/Reg)</i>
Further Education	Further Education Course (including Applied A Levels)	Nil
	Non-Applied A Levels per subject (if aged 19 or over on 1 July 2019)	£330

PART TIME COURSES (HOME STUDENTS INCLUDING EU)

Part Time Courses		Fee
Higher Education	Specified Courses (Degree, Foundation Degree, HND and HNC)	£700
	Other Courses at Level 5 / Level 4	£450
Further Education	Accredited Further Education Courses	Minimum of £2 per hour

INTERNATIONAL FEES

International Students – Higher Education		Fee
Full Time	Full Fee (including tuition, exam and registration)	£5,500
	Administration Fee	£1,000
Part Time	All courses [including administration fee]	£12.75 / hour

International Students – Further Education		Fee
Full Time	Full Fee (including tuition, exam and registration)	£4,400
	Administration Fee	£1,000
Part Time	All courses (excluding ESOL) [including administration fee]	£10.60 / hour
	ESOL [including Administration Fee]	£6.25 / hour

NON-ACCREDITED COURSES

	Fee
Non-Accredited courses*	Minimum of £3.00 per hour

* The Head of School will retain the right to vary the price of a non-accredited course when it is considered to be a cost recovery course.

Asylum Seekers, Refugees and Syrian Refugees Resettled in Northern Ireland

Asylum seekers, refugees (including VPRS participants) and those granted humanitarian protection, are entitled to immediate access to all FE provision on relocation.

Asylum seekers, refugees (including VPRS participants) and those granted humanitarian protection are eligible for free ESOL provision. However, if they wish to access other further education provision, normal fees policy will apply (i.e. Home Student Rate).

The spouse/civil partner of an asylum seeker, who has been so since the date of application for refugee status, and the child/children of the asylum seeker or of the spouse/partner of an asylum seeker, who was under 18 when the application for refugee status was made, will also be eligible. The spouse/civil partner and children of a Syrian refugee will also be eligible for provision.

Full details are available from the DfE Circular FE 12/15 and FE 12/15 Addendum No.1 and No. 2.

MISCELLANEOUS FEES (not exhaustive list)

Examination / Registration Fees (including examination resits)	At Cost
Course Materials / Equipment / Trips & Residentials	At Cost
International Student Administration Fee (Full Time)	£1,000
International Student Administration Fee (Part Time)	£500
Replacement Student ID Card	£10
Enhanced AccessNI Check (Criminal Record Check) ¹	At Cost
HE Students Resubmission of Assignment Work	£45
Confirmation of Results	£10
BTEC Higher National Annual Student Fee	£20
Failed Direct Debit Payments	£10

OTHER INFORMATION

Students studying Access courses may be required to complete GCSE English and Maths. Where this is required the following shall apply:

Full Time Access Students: Exam Fees chargeable

Part Time Access Students: Tuition and Exam Fees chargeable

¹ The College will consider offering assistance to students in the exceptional circumstance of requiring multiple AccessNI checks within the one academic year for the purposes of their course.

BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

Business engagement courses shall normally meet the following criteria:

- they shall not conflict with any statutory or general responsibility of SERC to provide further education within the statutory provisions under the direction of DfE;
- they shall not result in any reduction in existing College provision;
- the target student group shall be restricted and defined by the commissioning body within the arrangements agreed with the client; and
- the course shall be commissioned by an employer or group of employers or other agency.

Charges for business engagement will be based on a number of factors including:

- Delivery costs;
- Support staff costs (e.g. technician, finance, invigilator);
- Premises costs and location;
- Materials and administration and examinations cost;
- Specialist services;
- Market factor;
- Overhead absorption;
- Level of course;
- Assessor fees; and
- Travel costs.

A discount may be offered for commercial reasons such as for entry into a new market.

A premium may be charged in circumstances where the provision is of a very specialist nature, requires additional set-up costs or includes the use of specialist resources.

All pricing must be benchmarked with a competitor analysis.

APPENDIX B

TUITION FEE CONCESSIONS

Concessions are only applicable to tuition fees of part time accredited courses. Concessions are not applicable to examination or other costs included in the overall course fee. Non-Accredited courses are not entitled to concessions. International students will not qualify for concession.

Concessions are made available by the College to individual self-paying students. Organisations and employers who sponsor students are not entitled to concessions. There are two exceptions to this: i. the payment of part time tuition fees by Student Finance NI which by regulation is only liable to pay the reduced tuition fee if applicable, and ii. the payment of part time tuition fees by The Prince's Trust.

CATEGORIES OF TUITION FEE CONCESSIONS FOR ACCREDITED COURSES	EVIDENCE REQUIRED AT ENROLMENT	CONCESSION APPLICABLE (i.e. tuition fee reduction)
Aged 60 or over at the date of enrolment	Date of birth on enrolment form	25%
<p>Aged 16 but under 19 on 1 July 2020 and in receipt of (or dependent on spouse / partner / parent / guardian in receipt of) OR Aged 19 or over on 1st July 2020 and in receipt of (or dependent on spouse / partner in receipt of)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Guaranteed Pension Credit 2. Rate Relief or Rate Rebate 3. Working Tax Credit or Child Tax Credit (with an annual taxable income below the qualifying threshold as stated by HMRC) 4. Income Related Employment and Support Allowance 5. Income Support 6. Universal Credit where total income is confirmed as below the NHS Exemption Certificate qualifying threshold) 7. Income based Jobseekers Allowance 	<p>The following evidence should confirm current entitlements (<i>Evidence must be provided for inspection and photocopying, and be applicable, at the time of enrolment otherwise full course fees will be charged</i>):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social Security Agency letter Award Letter from NIHE/Land and Property Services HM Revenue & Customs Award Notice: Form TC602 Current Social Security Agency letter Current Social Security Agency letter Relevant UC Documentation Current Social Security Agency letter 	50%

Note: Where a student qualifies for more than one concession, the highest value concession only will be applied.

DISCOUNTS

The College offers two discounts.

Discounts are only applicable to tuition fees of accredited courses. Discounts are not applicable to examination or other costs included in the overall course fee.

Discounts are made available by the College to individual self-paying students. Organisations and employers who sponsor students are not entitled to discounts.

Discounts are available to both full time and part-time courses.

Discount Type	Description	Discount
Staff Discount*	Accredited courses at all levels	25%
Up Front Payment Discount	Self-Paying Students with course fee greater than £300 and no concession applied.	5%

*Staff discount cannot be used in conjunction with concessions.

APPENDIX C

PAYMENT OF FEES

1. Payment Information

Payment of fees must be arranged prior to course commencement. Fees are payable in each year of a two or three year programme.

Fees are payable at enrolment except for circumstances as outlined in section 2 to section 4 below.

SERC accepts cash, cheque (made payable to South Eastern Regional College or SERC), credit/debit card or other method approved by the College.

Receipts must be retained and may be required as evidence.

The payment of fees is the responsibility of each student. Students must be aware of their liability for fees as classes commence. Non-payment of fees will result in sanctions being imposed as detailed within the Credit Control and Debt Management SOP. Fee liability commences on the first day of the academic year or course start date in all circumstances (excluding any statutory rights). Students must sign the College's Terms & Conditions that confirm acceptance of liability.

Higher Education Students who withdraw from or go on a leave of absence will be charged a tuition fee as detailed below:

Withdrawal Dates	Fee Liability
From first day of term until 4 January 2021	25% of the full annual tuition fee
From 4 January 2021 until 5 April 2021	50% of the full annual tuition fee
From 6 April 2021	100% of the full annual tuition fee

2. Payment by Instalments

Where the total fee payable (after concessions or discounts) is over £300, payment may be collected using a direct debit payment plan arrangement. The direct debit arrangement is only available for enrolments on or before the second week of the class by completing a direct debit mandate (available from Customer Services or the Finance Department).

For Further Education and Part-Time HE courses the deposit payable at the time of enrolment is **25% of the total course fee** (see below for Full Time HE enrolments/A Level Enrolments for those aged 19 or over).

For September enrolments, two instalment payments will then be collected as follows:

Instalment Date	Amount Payable
1 December 2020	25% of total fee payable
1 February 2021	50% of total fee payable

For Full Time HE enrolments/A Level Enrolments (aged 19 or over) there is no deposit payable at time of enrolment. The first instalment is payable on 1 November as follows:

Instalment Date	Amount Payable
2 November 2020	25% of total fee payable

For January/February enrolments, two instalment payments will then be collected as follows:

Instalment Date	Amount Payable
1 March 2021	25% of total fee payable
4 May 2021	50% of total fee payable

Please note:

- › **Default in any payment will result in a £10 administration fee.**
- › **Default in any payment will result in enrolment on the course/programme of study becoming invalid.**
- › **Non-HE students who withdraw from their course are still liable for payment of their fee in full and therefore all direct debit payments will be collected.**
- › **Customers can avail of an up front full payment discount of 5% instead of instalments.**

3. Sponsors

Where a student is sponsored by an organisation, a completed sponsor liability form should be presented to Customer Services at the point of enrolment. The sponsor liability form is available from the SERC website.

Organisations and employers who sponsor students are liable for the full cost of the course fee. There shall be no concessions. The College will directly invoice the sponsor.

If the student leaves the sponsor's employment after the start date of the course the fee liability remains with the sponsor.

If the student leaves the sponsor's employment before the course starts the sponsor should notify the College, in writing, before the course starts to withdraw their support. In this case the course fee liability will transfer to the student. If the College is not notified, in writing, in advance of the start date the fee liability remains with the sponsor.

4. Student Finance NI

4.1 Further Education (Part-Time)

Student Finance NI provide Further Education Awards to support students undertaking a part-time further education course.

The College facilitates the administration of the FE Awards by promoting this fund and making the application forms available in reception areas. It is the responsibility of the student to ensure that all relevant paperwork has been completed and submitted by the relevant deadlines.

Student Finance NI make their tuition fee award payments directly to the College.

At time of enrolment:

- a. **Students who have received their award letter from Student Finance NI must present this to Customer Services. The amount of the award will be deducted from the total fee and if a balance remains this must be paid by the student at the point of enrolment (unless the criteria for payment by instalment is satisfied).**
- b. **Students who have not received their award letter from Student Finance NI must follow the guidance in section 1 and, if applicable, section 2 of this appendix relating to fee payments.**

When funding has been approved by Student Finance NI the student must present their award letter to Customer Services.

If the award covers the total fee, the College will refund the amount already paid by the student. The College will cancel the direct debit agreement and issue the refund.

If the award does not cover the total fee, the student remains liable for any balance remaining. If paying by instalments, the College will continue to proceed with the direct debit on the due dates.

In all instances, the College will refund to the student any overpayments that have been made to their account.

In the event of Student Finance NI not releasing the full amount of their award (for example by reason of student withdrawal), the student will be required to pay the remaining balance of the total fee.

4.2 Higher Education

Student Finance NI, through the Educational Authority, administer financial support to full and part time Higher Education students in Northern Ireland in conjunction with the Student Loans Company (SLC).

Full Time Students

Full time students can apply for a tuition fee loan by submitting a paper based application form (which can be collected from the College) or by applying online through the Student Finance NI website.

The Student Loans Company will make their tuition fee award payments directly to the College after confirmation of enrolment and attendance.

At time of enrolment:

- a. Students who have received their award letter from Student Finance NI must present this to Customer Services. The amount of the award will be deducted from the total fee (including any concession) and the student will be invoiced for the remaining fee with payment options as per section 1 and, if applicable, section 2.
- b. Students who have not received their award letter from Student Finance NI must sign a liability form and direct debit mandate.

Confirmation of funding must be submitted to Customer Services as soon as it is received.

The amount of the award will be deducted from the total fee and you will be invoiced for the remaining fee with payment options as per section 1 and, if applicable, section 2.

In all circumstances, the student is responsible for the payment of the total fee whether they complete the course or not. In the event of Student Loans Company not releasing the full amount of the award (or recalling amounts previously paid), the student will be required to pay the remaining balance of the total fee.

In the exceptional circumstances of a student requiring to suspend their studies for a semester, course fees for the relevant semester may only be suspended by following the HE Leave of Absence Process, detailed in the HE Student handbook, and approval received from the Financial Controller.

Part Time Students

Part time students can apply for assistance in the form of a means tested tuition fee grant, a course grant, and/or a non-means tested tuition fee loan dependent upon household income and course intensity. Tuition fee grants and loans are paid directly to the College.

For details see Higher Education Financial Support SOP.

A student informing Customer Services of their intention to apply for a part-time fee grant or loan can avail of the following arrangement at enrolment:

- › Deposit of 25% of total fees payable by student; and
- › Direct debit mandate to be signed by student; and

(This arrangement is also available for students who, on request of the College, are transferred from a full time to a part time higher education course).

The award letter must be submitted to Customer Services as soon as it is received by the student. If the Award letter is not submitted to Customer Services prior to the first direct debit instalment the College will proceed with the direct debit as per section 2. If the application for funding is unsuccessful or does not meet the full course fee the student is liable for the outstanding fees. In all instances, the College will refund to the student any overpayments that have been made to their account.