

Fee and Refund Policy

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Fee and Refund Policy

1. Introduction

The Governing Board is responsible for agreeing the College's Fee and Refunds Policy. This includes:

1. Fees setting for courses which the College can charge for
2. Fee payment and debt collection
3. Processing of refunds where conditions apply

2. Key Principles

The purpose of the policy is to provide transparency over the College's approach to charging fees, refunds and associated conditions including:

1. Setting of fees for all courses delivered by the College
2. Eligibility for tuition fee remission for students
3. Payment processes for course fees including loans and debt recovery processes
4. Implications of re-submission and late completion of work on fees
5. Refund processes for course fees

3. Responsibility

1. Vice Principal – Finance and Resources – Responsible for setting the outline policy and procedure for application by managers and staff in charging and refunding course fees along with decision making regarding refunds when required.
2. Vice Principal – Curriculum and Quality – Responsible for ensuring refunds are appropriately applied for curriculum courses.
3. Principal – Responsible for ensuring refunds are appropriately applied for commercial courses.
4. Head of Quality – Responsible for ensuring appropriate investigations are carried out for curriculum refunds where applicable.
5. MIS Manager – Responsible for ensuring refunds are processed accordingly.
6. Staff and Managers – Responsible for application of the fees and refunds policy and procedure when liaising with students.
7. Students – Responsible for providing all relevant information when applying to ensure fees can be charged appropriately.

4. Legislation

The fee policy shall comply with relevant funding bodies' rules and regulations including those relating to fee remission and fee levels.

Fee and Refund Procedure

1. Introduction

Craven College is committed to charging fees and having a refund mechanism that is fair and equitable for students. The following procedures detail how the objectives of the Fee and Refunds Policy will be met and identifies:

1. Key Processes
2. Roles and Responsibilities
3. Objectives
4. Communication
5. Implementation
6. Monitoring
7. Reporting
8. Assessment of Impact
9. Continuous Improvement
10. Associated Documentation

2. Key Processes

The key processes in the procedure are:

1. Setting of fees for courses delivered by the College
2. Payment processes for course fees including loans
3. Support available for fees
4. Debt recovery processes
5. Implications of non-payment of fees on qualifications
6. Implications of re-submission and late completion of work on fees
7. Refund processes for course fees
8. Appeals process

3. Roles and Responsibilities

1. Vice Principal – Finance and Resources – Responsible for setting the outline policy and procedure for application by managers and staff in charging and refunding course fees along with decision making regarding refunds when required.
2. Vice Principal – Curriculum and Quality – Responsible for ensuring refunds are appropriately applied for curriculum courses.
3. Principal – Responsible for ensuring refunds are appropriately applied for commercial courses.
4. Head of Quality – Responsible for ensuring appropriate investigations are carried out for curriculum refunds where applicable.
5. MIS Manager – Responsible for ensuring refunds are processed accordingly.
6. Staff and Managers – Responsible for application of the fees and refunds policy and procedure when liaising with students.
7. Students – Responsible for providing all relevant information when applying to ensure fees can be charged appropriately.

4. Objectives

The objectives of this policy and procedure are:

1. Set fees that are fair and equitable for the College and students
2. Provide a clear process of the payment and refund process for staff and students
3. Outline the implications to students of non-payment of fees

5. Communication

The following principles are fundamental to the communication of the Fees and Refund Policy:

1. Fee and Refund Policy will be published on a standardised template
2. Fee and Refund Policy will be reviewed by the Vice Principal – Finance and Resources, before being escalated to the SMT for approval.
3. This policy will be ratified by the Finance, Resources and Investment Committee of the governing board.
4. The audience of this policy is all staff, students and customers.
5. This policy will be published on the website and intranet.

6. Implementation

The following section outlines how the policy of fees and refunds will be implemented in the College:

a. Course Fees

- i. Students are normally expected to pay the total amount of course tuition and exam fees at enrolment, however the College recognises the need for flexibility and has outlined a range of payment options
- ii. Where a course has additional resource fees, these will be indicated in published materials and collected at enrolment. An administration charge may be included in the stated examination / registration fee.
- iii. If, at the required time of publishing, the cost of any of the above elements cannot be reasonably estimated, the published fee shall be exclusive of that element which shall be charged separately when the costs can be assessed with more certainty. This will be made clear at enrolment.
- iv. Course fee levels shall be set with the aim of recovering the costs of all of the elements making up the total course costs. In setting the tuition fee element of the course fees, reference will be made to the assumed fee income level set by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), Office for Students (OfS) or other funding and take account of:
 - Impact on recruitment, retention and achievement
 - Market conditions
 - Widening participation
 - Funding available from other sources
- v. Where courses are delivered outside the ESFA, OfS or other funding mechanism, the tuition fee element will be based on full economic costs of delivery and market conditions and may vary throughout the academic year. Fees for Commercial courses delivered by Tyro Training will be charged and invoiced up to two months in advance. Credit (invoicing) will only be available to customers with an established credit record, as per Tyro Financial Processes.

- vi. The tuition fee structure set for each academic year will apply throughout that year unless unforeseen circumstances intervene.
 - vii. Where courses are longer than a single academic year then the tuition fees set in the year that the course commences and will apply to every following year of the course throughout its duration, and will be collected at the commencement of each academic year unless unforeseen circumstances intervene. This does not apply to HE where fees may increase on an annual basis by the cost of living rise.
 - viii. Where a one-year course commences in one academic year and finishes in another, the tuition fees chargeable will be determined by the fee structure set for the academic year in which the course commences.
- b. Fee Payment
- i. At enrolment students will be required to pay their fees or indicate how the fees will be funded. The College provides a range of payment options.
 - ii. For course fees, excluding examination / registration fees or other costs, over such level as the Principal or nominee shall from time to time determine, payment by a maximum of six equal monthly instalments shall be permitted. The number of instalments permitted depends on the date of the first instalment. All instalments will be on the 1st (first) of the month. At enrolment students must pay for all exam fees and 20% of the course fees, the remaining instalments are payable from the second full month following the start of the course. Instalments can be arranged for fees over £340.
 - iii. For fees below this level, where a student is able to demonstrate financial hardship, it is at the Principal's or nominee's discretion to allow payment by instalment.
 - iv. Where fees are to be paid wholly, or in part, by an employer / sponsor, confirmation in writing must be provided at enrolment or through the Tyro Training booking system. Without this confirmation, students will be expected to pay directly at enrolment or will not be enrolled onto the course.
 - v. Students shall be liable for payment in the event that employers / sponsors withdraw their commitment to pay.
 - vi. A summary of the payment process is included in Appendix 1.
- c. Support with fees
- i. Provision may be made to offer financial help towards fees, subject to criteria set by the Principal.
 - ii. The College will support students to access external financial assistance towards tuition fees.
 - iii. The College will not offer direct financial advice, but refer students to the Money Advice Service as appropriate.
 - iv. The College can help with the completion of loan applications to Student Finance England. All responsibility for the initial application, the progress of the application and approval of the loan remains with the student / applicant.
 - v. Eligibility for tuition fee remission is determined by the appropriate funding bodies and remission will only be granted on the production of such proof of eligibility as is specified by the funding bodies. In line with funding body rules, students qualifying for full fee remission will not be expected to pay additional costs such as examination / registration fees.
 - vi. Students must provide evidence of current eligible benefits and complete the necessary form(s) to prove eligibility for fee waiver
 - vii. All fee waivers will be assessed on the benefits a student is in receipt of on the start date of the course and should be provided at enrolment. Benefits that are approved following enrolment cannot be retrospectively applied.
 - viii. Failure to provide the relevant proof of eligibility within 4 weeks of enrolment will result in the student being invoiced for the course and exam fees in full, and

pursued for the payment of said fees. In some cases, students may be not be enrolled on programmes until the proof of benefit has been produced.

- ix. Advanced Learning Loans and Higher Education Loans should be in place as soon as possible. Until a loan is received students should arrange payment per section 6(b) and fees reimbursed when a loan is secured.
- x. Students shall be liable for payment in the event that the loan application does not proceed or is unsuccessful. Any unsecured loans will be billed directly to the students at the end of the first half term. If a student pays the course fee and subsequently successfully applies for a student loan, the fee paid by the student will be refunded.
- xi. Where students provide proof that they have a loan application with Student Finance England, any fees / charges over and above the amount in the application must be paid on enrolment.

d. Debt Recovery

- i. Where fees have been invoiced but have not been paid in full within 60 days of the invoice date, alternative payment arrangements have not been agreed, or if agreed have not been complied with, the outstanding debt will be referred to the College's Debt Collection Agents.
- ii. A debt recovery administration charge of 15%, plus a solicitor fee and interest will be added to the outstanding debt to cover the debt collection costs.
- iii. A student shall not be permitted to continue on a subsequent year of a multi-year course if there is debt outstanding in relation to a previous year, or to continue on a new course if there is outstanding debt in relation to an earlier course.
- iv. Students with outstanding debt will not be allowed to attend any graduation ceremony.
- v. A summary of the debt recovery process and consequences of persistent debt is included in Appendix 2.

e. Qualifications

- i. It is a requirement that a student enrolling on a funded College course leading to a qualification undertakes the examination or other assessments required to obtain the qualification.
- ii. If a student refuses to undertake the qualification assessments, or fails to attend the examination, the cost of the examination may be charged.
- iii. Where a student has to pay for an examination, all fees must be paid in advance, failure to pay the exam fee by the required date will mean that the student will not be entered for the exam.
- iv. Students with outstanding debts may be refused entry to some or all examinations for some or all of the courses on which they are enrolled.
- v. Students requiring to re-sit an exam or re-present a unit within or beyond the end of the academic year / course will pay further fees to cover any additional tuition, tutorials, assessment and examination / re-registration required.
- vi. Students who do not pay in a timely manner, have written off debts or are referred to the Colleges debt collection agency will not be given any future credit with Craven College. This means that all fees / costs in subsequent years must be paid in full upon enrolment.

f. Re-submission and Late completion of work

- i. All students will be provided with appropriate tuition, support and opportunities for assessment to complete their course of study by their expected qualification end date. In most cases this will be the end of the academic year. An appropriate programme of assessment and an Individualised Learning Plan will provide a framework for students to manage their own time effectively.

- ii. Students who fail to submit all necessary work for assessment by the end of their course may negotiate with their tutor an extended deadline up to 31 August of the same academic year, in exceptional circumstances and subject to the tutor's discretion. Extensions are not automatically available for Higher Education courses and students should refer to their course handbook for guidance.
- iii. Any student who submits work for assessment on or after 31 August in the academic year following the course completion date, will be charged a Late Completion Fee of £50 per assignment or piece of work submitted for assessment. Payment must be made to a College Reception, the assignment front cover should be signed and/or email confirmation sent by the person taking payment. The receipt should be stapled to the assignment front cover where hard copy is submitted. Photocopies/electronic copies of submitted work should be retained by the student. Tutors should check the above to confirm that payment has been made when accepting work for marking.
- iv. The Late Completion Fee may be waived in cases of long-term illness, hospitalisation, bereavement or other exceptional circumstances, at the discretion of the Vice Principal - Curriculum and Quality.

g. Refund of Fees

- i. All learners accept responsibility for payment in full of course fees and examination / registration fees by signing a College Student Enrolment Form.
- ii. Fees paid in advance shall generally not be refundable and outstanding fees shall remain payable. The circumstances where refunds / credits may be made include:
 - Where a course has been closed by the College or the time and / or day changed such that the student can no longer attend or the student has notified their withdrawal from the course at least 5 working days prior to the course start date.
 - If the College changes the time and day of a course / class after it has started and the learner is no longer able to attend, the amount of fees refunded will take into account the time the learner has already been on the course. In every case the College will endeavour to offer a suitably acceptable alternative course.
 - If the College's initial fee assessment is incorrect, resulting in an overcharge, it will refund the difference of fees charged to the learner.

The MIS Manager is authorised to recommend refunds under these circumstances

- iii. In all other circumstances, fees will not normally be refunded. In the event of extraordinary set of circumstances (e.g. coronavirus), courses will initially be assessed as postponed and that fees paid in advance will be retained and reassessed when the rescheduling of course provisions is known.
- iv. The College will consider a refund of fees from the student only, or legal parent/guardian if under 18, in full or in part when circumstances which make it impossible for the student to take up or continue with their studies are exceptional and entirely outside the control of the individual concerned. In such cases the College shall consider a refund / credit of fees in full or in part at the discretion of the Vice Principal Curriculum and Quality. These cases can be difficult to rule upon and careful consideration will be given to the individual circumstances. Examples may be:
 - i. The student relocating away from the area, such that attending the course is no longer feasible

- ii. Death / serious illness of a member of the immediate family necessitating a change of responsibility for the student
- iii. Long-term personal illness / injury preventing study and realistic completion of the course (medical certification will be required to support). In some instances, fees may be deferred to the following academic year.

Any refund under these circumstances will relate only to parts of the course not yet undertaken when the refund request is made and will be limited to remaining full terms of the course. If examination / registration fees have not yet been paid to the Awarding Organisation, these will be refunded in full. The MIS Manager is authorised to recommend refunds under these circumstances with reference to the Head of Quality.

- v. Where the student has enrolled on a course and it is subsequently identified that, through no fault of the student, they have been directed to a learning programme that is inappropriate for their level of ability. NB The Head of Department/tutor concerned must support the case. The College will endeavour to offer a suitable, acceptable alternative course, or the refund may be given as a credit note for a future course. The Head of Quality will ensure an appropriate investigation is carried out in such circumstances before approval for a refund is made by the Principal or Vice Principal – Finance and Resources.
 - vi. Where a student submits a formal complaint about the quality of a course which is substantiated following a detailed investigation instigated by the Head of Quality. If it is determined that there are substantial grounds for the complaint, a partial refund may be made. This will be calculated on the basis of the remaining full terms of the course. Alternatively, a credit note for a future course may be issued. For curriculum courses the Head of Quality will ensure an appropriate investigation is carried out in such circumstances before approval for a refund is made by the Principal or Vice Principal – Finance and Resources. For commercial courses these will be investigated and recommended by the Principal.
 - vii. Monthly payments made to the College by the Student Finance cease when a student leaves their course. In accordance with guidance from Government, HE students would not be liable for the amount outstanding in these circumstances.
 - viii. Other staff should take care not to pre-empt the outcome of formal consideration of a refund application by commenting informally or otherwise on the likelihood of such an application being successful.
 - ix. Refunds will normally be made within 15 working days.
 - x. Where applicable, students wishing to complain or apply for a fee waiver must do so in writing within 10 working days of bringing the issue to the attention of the College at enquiries@craven-college.ac.uk
 - xi. A summary of the refund procedure is included in Appendix 3.
- h. Appeals
- i. All requests for refunds will be referred to the relevant manager.
 - ii. Responses will normally be given within 15 working days.
 - iii. An administration charge of £10 will generally be made for processing any refunds, but may be waived in certain circumstances if considered appropriate.
 - iv. If the student is not satisfied with the decision taken in their case, they can submit an appeal setting out additional information in support of the case. The appeal must be in writing and be received by the Finance department and reviewed by the Vice Principal – Finance & Resources and Vice Principal – Curriculum & Quality within 15 working days of receiving the initial decision.
 - v. Appeals will only be considered where relevant additional information is provided.

7. Monitoring

Monitoring of this policy will be carried out through:

1. Satisfaction of students with the quality of courses
2. Debt levels of students
3. Volume of refunds processed

8. Reporting

Reporting of debt levels is provided to the Finance, Resources and Investment Committee as part of the monthly management accounts produced.

9. Assessment of Impact

The impact of this policy has been assessed with consideration of the financial health and resources of the College to ensure there are robust procedures in place to ensure effective and fair fee setting and payment is in place.

10. Continuous Improvement

The policy and procedure will be reviewed on an annual basis considering changes in the wider economy, financial health of the College and internal processes. These will be actioned through updates in policy and procedure as required with reporting carried out as outlined above.

11. Associated Documentation

All associated documentation is included in this policy and procedure.

Appendix 1 – Summary of the Payment Process

1. All fees should be paid in full at enrolment
2. The student is at all times responsible for all arrangements relating to the payment of their fees
3. Where payment has not been made, and arrangements to pay are not in place for the following reasons (these are examples and will not cover all possible situations) the debt recovery process as outlined below will be invoked:
 - a. Direct Debit Mandate not returned by the student
 - b. Student does not provide evidence of relevant benefit
 - c. Student does not provide confirmation of payment from their employer
 - d. Student does not have an approved loan in place from Student Finance (19+ loans and Higher Education Loans)
 - e. Student was enrolled without any funding in place
 - f. Student was enrolled without payment being taken

Appendix 2 – Summary of Debt Collection and Consequences of Persistent Outstanding Debt

The College recognises that students need flexibility when paying fees and we therefore provide a range of payment options. At enrolment you will be required to pay your fees or indicate how your fees will be funded. Prompt payments enable us to keep costs down and prices competitive.

This document explains the process that the College will follow where fees have not been paid or funding has not been approved.

1. An invoice will be raised for the outstanding amount and sent to the student for immediate payment
2. Craven College Finance Department will contact students by telephone, text message, email and letter to progress payment of any outstanding debts
3. Craven College Finance Department will also ask other College staff, for example tutors and Student Services, to speak to students with outstanding debt
4. Reminder Letter One will be sent if payment has not been arranged by 30 days from the date of the invoice
5. Reminder Letter Two will be sent if payment has not been arranged by 60 days from the date of the invoice
6. Unresolved debts of 90 days from the date of the invoice may be referred to the College's debt collection company.
7. Referral to the debt collection company will result in some or all of the following:
 - a. 15% debt recovery administration charge added to the outstanding debt
 - b. Late payment interest charges may be added to the outstanding debt. These will be based on Craven College's Financial Regulations and/or statutes
 - c. Detrimental impact on future credit rating
 - d. Court action
8. In addition to the actions listed above, should there be outstanding debts at the end of the academic year, Craven College will take the following actions:
 - a. The student will not be issued with any certificates for any courses until the outstanding debt has been paid
 - b. Students with outstanding debt will not be invited to attend the graduation ceremony
 - c. Students with outstanding debt will not be allowed to enrol or attend College for future study until all debts have been paid in full
 - d. Student may be prevented from attending exams
 - e. Students, who do not pay in a timely manner, have written off debts or have been referred to a debt collection agency by the College will not be given any future credit with Craven College and all fees/costs incurred in subsequent years must be paid in full upon enrolment

Appendix 3 – Refund Procedure

