

## **Higher Education Fees Policy 2024-25**

### **1 PURPOSE**

- 1.1 The Corporation is fully committed to a transparent fee structure that informs individuals and companies about the costs of study and informs them about any exemptions to payment of fees.
- 1.2 In addition to fees payable for other courses, the City of Portsmouth College (CoPC) makes annual tuition charges to Level 4+ students on all higher education (HE) programmes.
- 1.3 The College has been placed on the UK Register of HE Providers (the Register) by the Office for Students (OfS) as the national regulator for higher education under 'Approved (fee limit)' status.
- 1.4 In accordance with its position on the Register, CoPC is approved to charge students on higher education courses appropriate and affordable tuition fees in line with guidelines produced by the OfS and its ongoing conditions of regulation for universities and colleges.
- 1.5 Tuition fees are set to ensure that when learner numbers are taken into account, the College is able at least to cover the full costs of each programme with the income received from students.

### **2 DETAILS OF POLICY**

- 2.1 To operate at all times in keeping with the current guidance supplied by the OfS, accreditation and awarding bodies, validating universities and partner organisations.
- 2.2 To realise for the Corporation a fee income in pursuit of corporate objectives.
- 2.3 To set fee levels that are market related in line with the College's mission and values.
- 2.4 To ensure that the learner is aware of the full annual and total cost of the course on enrolment. This will include tuition fees, required reading and other study materials, any applicable examination or registration charges, as well as associated or encouraged activities that could incur expenditure, such as residentials or work placements. Costs for trips, visits or other optional expenditure will be levied directly at the relevant point in the course when the student would be expected to pay for them.
- 2.5 The College guarantees that:
  - no change to this policy will disadvantage any individual learner part-way through the agreed programme of study;
  - the tuition fee for the second year of a two-year programme will not increase from that in the first year provided that the nature of the course has not materially altered; and
  - no element of the policy will be altered more than once a year, except where significant changes in Government policy impact on the delivery of a programme.

- 2.6 Learners, who are based in the UK, eligible for a tuition fee loan from the Student Loan Company (SLC) and intending to pay for a CoPC higher education course in this manner, should follow the statutory guidance at all times and ensure that all SLC documentation is completed fully and accurately.
- 2.7 Once the College has confirmed the enrolment of any learner on an HE programme to the SLC, tuition fee loan payments in respect of the particular year of study will automatically be made directly to CoPC and the learner will become liable for repayment of them according to the following schedule:

<b>When learner becomes liable</b>	<b>How much learner is liable for</b>
at start of Term 1	25% of the tuition fee
at start of Term 2	50% of the tuition fee
at start of Term 3	100% of the tuition fee

- 2.8 Actions to be implemented in the case where payment is not forthcoming at these appointed times, is outlined in section 4 below.
- 2.9 The College will review the HE Fees Policy annually.

### **3 FEE LEVELS**

- 3.1 City of Portsmouth College is included on the Office for Students' UK Register of HE providers in the Approved (fee cap) category and its fees are in line with the OfS guidelines that stipulate appropriate tuition fees for all registered universities and colleges.
- 3.2 Fee levels charged to higher education students are determined on an annual basis but remain applicable for the entirety of a course (see 2.5 above).
- 3.3 To determine the applicable fee level for each learner at the start of the academic year, all applicants to HE programmes will be assigned as either 'Home' or 'International' students. By far the majority of learners will be 'Home' students; however, the College reserves the right to impose higher tuition fee levels on 'International' students. A provisional assessment will be undertaken at the point of application to decide which category each learner belongs to; if any uncertainty exists, further information may be requested from the applicant.
- 3.4 For the academic year relevant to this policy document (2024-25), fees for 'Home' students will not exceed £6,000 per annum. For any 'International' students joining HE provision in 2024-25, fees will generally be higher than those charged to 'Home' students and will be fixed for all such learners at the point when offers are made.
- 3.5 The anticipated cost of any materials deemed necessary for a particular HE programme is agreed at course level and reviewed annually by the Chief Operating Officer (COO), as is the case for all other charges related to the programme.
- 3.6 Within OfS guidelines, the College retains the option to 'market price' courses when and where appropriate, at the discretion of the COO.

## **4 PAYMENT OF FEES**

- 4.1 All fees will be due from the point of enrolment in accordance with the payment schedule for higher education tuition costs outlined in 2.7 above. Places on a course are not confirmed until initial payment has been received.
- 4.2 Fees will be payable to City of Portsmouth College, unless the learner is on a programme delivered under a franchise arrangement with the University of Portsmouth (e.g. FdSc Computing) or another HEI. In such situations, application and enrolment procedures are the responsibility of the external institution and tuition fees are also paid directly to the awarding university.
- 4.3 For learners funding their studies with a loan from the SLC, the tuition fees will in all cases be paid directly to the enrolling institution.
- 4.4 For self-funding students, whose tuition is directly payable to City of Portsmouth College, the entire annual fee can be paid at enrolment or learners domiciled in the UK can take advantage of the same system of instalments available to SLC-funded students. During main enrolment at the start of the year, applicable fee payments can be made in any of the following ways:
  - (i) by bank card
  - (ii) in cash
  - (iii) by cheque
  - (iv) electronically via bank transfer
- 4.5 Following main enrolment, only bank card payments or electronic bank transfers will be accepted. For tuition fees that become liable during the study year, learners also have the option of setting up direct debit payments; however, no cash or cheques will be taken, other than in exceptional circumstances approved by the COO.
- 4.6 For sponsored learners, a letter from the employer, including an invoice, must be presented at main enrolment to confirm that all tuition fees are being paid on the learner's behalf by the company or organisation. Invoices must be supplied on company letterhead with a Purchase Order Number.
- 4.7 Any instalment plans outside the above terms, afforded to a student on whatever grounds, must be individually approved by the COO.
- 4.8 It is not admissible for learners to have an outstanding balance from previous years or to have previously defaulted on payment arrangements. The College will take appropriate action in such cases.
- 4.9 Where tuition fee payments are not made by the prescribed due date (see 2.7) or if collection of direct debit payments is unsuccessful, the College (in association with collaborative partner institutions as applicable) will seek to recover fees directly from learners.
- 4.10 To protect its financial interests, the College implements a seven-day notice period from the originally scheduled date, in which payment is to be made. Where this is not forthcoming or it remains impossible for the payment to be collected, the learner will be asked to leave their programme of study but will continue to be liable for any outstanding fees.

- 4.11 Learners who find themselves in particular financial difficulty should make the College aware of this situation as early as possible and will be provided with appropriate support and guidance. Any default on fee payments in the context of the above framework will nonetheless result in the student being disbarred from continuing the programme leading to official withdrawal being imposed by the College.
- 4.12 Individual arrangements with students experiencing difficulty in making fee payments may be agreed by the COO in cooperation with any partner institution as applicable; however, the potential financial risk to the College dictates that this would only happen in exceptional circumstances and would be time restricted to a specified final payment due date.
- 4.13 Learners remain ultimately liable for the payment of their tuition fees, including where they are self-funded (as opposed to finance being provided through SLC) or individual sponsorship agreements have been approved by the COO (e.g. with an employer). The College will always seek to recover fees directly from learners, where payment from other approved sources is not forthcoming.
- 4.14 Learners who elect individually to withdraw from their higher education programmes at CoPC remain liable for full fees until they formally withdraw and will be charged accordingly. The arrangements detailed in the sections above are fully operative in all such cases.
- 4.15 The College reserves the right to pursue defaulters through the courts if deemed necessary and, where applicable, seek to recover any costs thus incurred.

## **5 WITHDRAWALS AND REFUNDS**

- 5.1 The possibility of refunds and compensation in relation to HE programmes at CoPC is dealt with in full in the accompanying Higher Education Refunds and Compensation Policy.
- 5.2 Any HE student wishing to withdraw from their programme should in the first instance approach their personal tutor and/or the Curriculum Manager or Assistant Principal for their area of study. Should a student wish to seek confidential support or individual counselling, the facility for such private advice and conversations also exists within the College.
- 5.3 Each withdrawal is subject to the completion of a withdrawal checklist, encompassing measures to support students to continue studying wherever possible. This is approved by the relevant member of the Senior Management team before being passed for processing.
- 5.4 If a student is withdrawing due to dissatisfaction with the course provision or any other aspect of the College, the complaint will be passed to Quality Department who will investigate in conjunction with the appropriate Learning Area Manager, Director of HE and Vice Principal.
- 5.5 'International' students who have paid a deposit on course fees and have not applied for a visa will receive a refund on confirmation of their intention to withdraw, less a £250 administrative fee.
- 5.6 'International' students who may have paid full tuition fees in order to receive a Confirmation of Acceptance to Study (CAS) and are subsequently refused a visa by the British Embassy or British High Commission will receive a refund on receipt of the visa refusal letter, less a £250 administrative fee. Evidence of visa refusal will be required by the College.

5.9 'International' Students who arrive late for programmes as a result of unavoidable delays will be given a proportionate credit for the missing weeks or a credit note to be used within 12 months. This arrangement does not apply to any pre-session courses. The College has the final decision as to what circumstances constitute "unavoidable".