

## UHI ORKNEY FURTHER EDUCATION FEES POLICY 2023-24

*This Policy provides UHI Orkney's position regarding the payment of further education (FE) tuition fees. This policy will also apply to higher education (HE) tuition in circumstances that are not covered by the UHI Higher Education Fee Policy.*

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## Introduction

This policy details essential information relating to fees and payment of fees. It outlines the responsibilities of the college and students in relation to fees that may be charged to an enrolled student undertaking a further education course. The policy applies to all students on further education courses.

All students and staff should familiarise themselves with this policy.

The tuition fees and fee policy are reviewed annually. Tuition fees may be subject to annual increases reflecting changes in government policies and guidelines and increases in costs of delivery.

Fees for full-time Scottish domiciled students are set by the Scottish Government. Other fees are set annually by the College.

There may be instances where fees need to be set or varied out with the annual fee setting cycle. The fees policy provides authority to the Principal, to agree to such fees or variations.

## Payment of fees

All students enrolling on further education courses are required to pay tuition fees which are due in full at enrolment each year, unless otherwise agreed in advance (see Section 5, Instalment Policy).

The payment of fees is the responsibility of the student. In the event of a student's sponsoring authority (e.g., Student Awards Agency for Scotland (SAAS), employer or other funder, or a parent or guardian) failing to make payment, the student will be held personally liable for payment. Any student having financial difficulties in paying fees or other costs relating to studying at the college should contact student support staff and the finance team.

The tuition fee normally covers enrolment, tuition, and assessment. For the avoidance of doubt, the fee does not include costs for travel to/from induction sessions; cost of field trips and similar; specialist personal equipment; books (other than library access and access to on-line materials and journals). Some courses incur additional costs, further details can be obtained from your Curriculum Lead.

Students who are considering leaving their programme of study are encouraged to first contact their home academic partner for advice and guidance to understand any implications, including liability for part or all their tuition fees, of withdrawing from their studies.

[2023-24-UHI-Orkney---FE-Financial-Implications-of-Withdrawing.pdf](#)

The policy is available to staff via SharePoint. Students and prospective students are either signposted to or can find the policy on the UHI Orkney website.

## Tuition Fee Determination

Tuition fee payable will depend on:

- Mode and level of study
- Student's fee status
- Type of student
- Any relevant bursaries, discounts, or scholarships
- Other fees may also be payable.

### 1. Mode and level of attendance

The number of units or modules or equivalent a student is registered on within a year of study will determine the mode of study as either full-time or part-time for fee purposes.

#### 1.1 Transfers

Students who transfer to another course within the college or change their mode of attendance may be liable for additional fees based on their revised units/credit load or any other fee differential.

*Where students transfer between academic partners, the original partner will retain the fee if the transfer is after 1 November, if it is before the 1 November then the fee goes to the new academic partner.*

## **2. Fee status**

### **2.1 Assessment of fee status**

The college makes a provisional assessment of fee status based on the information provided on the student application form, pending confirmation (if appropriate) from the funding bodies. This assessment is clearly stated on all offer letters and applicants are directed to the UHI Orkney website, or Finance Team to find the actual fee due. Before making the provisional assessment, further information from applicants may be requested. It is important that applicants understand the college's assessment of fee status before accepting an offer.

The final determination of fee status will be made at enrolment when evidence of, for example term-time residence, may be required. If it is subsequently discovered that incorrect or incomplete information has been provided by the student, the college may change the student's fee status and seek to recover any underpayment, including from previous years.

The fee status assessment at the start of the course continues for the duration of the course even if circumstances change, except for changes relating to SAAS or other UK funding bodies eligibility.

If the fee charged is miscalculated due to a fault or error on the part of the college in assessing fee status, the students will be informed, and the fee adjusted to the correct level for the remainder of the course of study.

In the event of a student being dissatisfied with their fee status assessment they may submit a complaint via the complaints handling procedure.

<https://www.uhi.ac.uk/en/students/support/complaints/>

### **2.2 Fee status descriptions and fee implications**

Fee status determines how much a student pays in tuition fees. It is based on nationality, where the student normally lives and how long they have lived there as well as term-time location at the start of the course and the type of course studied.

The fees for full-time Scottish domiciled students are set by the Scottish Government.

Other fees are set annually by the College.

There may be instances where fees need to be set or varied out with the annual fee setting cycle. The fees policy provides authority to the Principal, to agree to such fees or variations.

For further details regarding fees please see the Orkney College website:

[Courses - Orkney College UHI](#)

### **3. Bursaries, discounts, and scholarships**

Fees may be waived or discounted in accordance with this policy or the Further Education Fee Waiver Policy where applicable.

#### **3.1 Bursary full time fees**

Students registered as full time on a programme will usually either be granted full time FE Fee Waiver (for students under eighteen at commencement of course) or awarded OIC Local Education Authority (LEA) FE fee bursary in relation to their support funding. If the student is not eligible for the full time FE Fee Waiver or OIC FE full time bursary the student will be charged the full-time fee.

#### **3.2 Scottish Funding Council (SFC) Part Time Fee Waiver**

The SFC runs a Part Time Fee Waiver scheme to assist participation in further education by part time students who are unemployed or from low-income backgrounds. Students undertaking an eligible course and who meet the criteria for the part time fee waiver grant are eligible to apply. Fee Waiver applications can be made electronically by logging into the individual student UHI record. Part Time students will see the link on their Student Hub page. An exception applies to school pupils attending evening classes, paper forms can be requested from

[OCshortcourses@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:OCshortcourses@uhi.ac.uk)

[Current students - Student support- Orkney College UHI](#)

#### **3.3 Staff Discount**

A fee discount of 20% will apply to all employees of UHI Orkney (not the wider Orkney Islands Council) for taught programmes regardless of whether the study is funded by their employer or by themselves. This includes both regulated and unregulated fees, the latter including full cost recovery. This will not be available in conjunction with any bursary or scholarship or combinable with any other discount. Where the activity receives 50% staff development funding, the 20% discount will be applied to the total amount. The 50% staff development funding will be calculated on the remaining amount.

Note for clarification: discounts are applied by the relevant home academic partner and reduce the fee income from these students.

#### **3.4 Published fees for commercial and full cost recovery courses**

Discounts may be granted, for example, for bulk provision or to meet market requirements.

#### **3.5 Senior phase pupils**

The Orkney College has the discretion to waive fees for students studying at HE level on senior phase programmes, this also includes home schooled students.

## **4. Other fees**

### **4.1 Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL)/Credit Transfer**

There is no fee for assessment or administration of RPL/Credit Transfer claims either for entry to a course or for credit exemption.

### **4.2 Fees for module or unit reassessment**

The module fee includes a student's first attempt at all elements of assessment and one reassessment opportunity, normally within the same academic year. If a student does not pass a module at the second attempt, they may be permitted to repeat the module, normally in the following academic year. The appropriate module fee will be payable. Full teaching input will be available.

Where mitigating circumstances are accepted, a student will not be charged for assessment where this is deemed to be the first or second attempt. However, fees for repeating modules or units due to mitigating circumstances will normally still apply. A student may present a case for mitigating circumstances to the Curriculum Leader/Assistant Principal that the module or unit fee is waived.

### **4.3 Fees for SQA unit reassessment**

SQA units allow for two assessment attempts, in many cases students remain eligible for further reassessment to successfully pass an SQA unit without needing formally to repeat it, *and it remains as an 'open registration' in SITS*. If a student requires to access an exceptional third attempt for a unit, they do not need to be re-registered for that unit, and no fee will apply. Students must complete the third attempt within three years of their initial enrolment on the unit.

### **4.4 Fee to sit exam at an alternative location.**

At enrolment, students are required to specify their location to sit exams, which will normally be at a UHI Orkney campus. If a student needs to sit an exam (first or subsequent attempt) at a different UHI location, a variable fee may be charged to the student by the Exam Centre to cover accommodation and invigilation costs.

Students may apply to sit an exam at an approved alternative venue and will be responsible for meeting any costs levied by the venue.

### **4.5 Certificates**

#### **SQA students**

Most students enrol for a specific SQA group award (e.g., "HND Accounting"), and the fee for certification of that award by SQA is included in any tuition fees charged. SQA issue the group award certificate automatically. They also issue transcripts automatically and free of charge. SQA charge a fee for a replacement certificate. Students should apply directly to SQA.

**SQA certification fees – additional group awards**

On occasion, if a student has completed a certain combination of units, they may seek certification for an additional group award (e.g., a Professional Development Award (PDA)) **as well as** the group award for which they were originally enrolled. There is no additional cost to the student for getting certification of an 'enclosed' PDA within their HNC or HND.

Students may initially enroll for individual SQA units only, studying on a part-time basis. If they successfully achieve sufficient relevant units to be eligible, and subsequently seek a group award, SQA will charge a certification fee. In these circumstances, the college will pay the certification fee charged by SQA, and the student will not be charged an additional fee.

**Awards Ceremony fees**

The College does not charge students to attend the awards ceremony. Charges are made to students and guests to attend a reception. Attendance at both the awards ceremony and reception are optional.

**Fee for students enrolling on a module/unit but without assessment.**

If a student wishes to enroll on a module/unit without being formally assessed, they can do so but will be charged the full applicable fee rate. These students are not eligible to be returned to SFC and will not generate any FTE-related income.

**Other fees**

Other fees are charged at the rate set by the college.

## Payment Options

All tuition fees for the academic year are due in full at the point of enrolment each year unless students are eligible to pay by instalments and have arranged this in advance.

### 5. Instalment policy

The purpose of the instalment payment facility is to allow enrolment on a course for students who are not able to pay the full course fee at the time of enrolment. Where an instalment payment facility has been offered and the student subsequently withdraws from the course, liability for the relevant course fee remains. An instalment payment facility is a route of access to a course and not a pro rata payment agreement.

The award of an instalment payment facility is not automatic.

Enquires can be made to the Finance Team, email [ocrevenue@uhi.ac.uk](mailto:ocrevenue@uhi.ac.uk) at any time prior to enrolment or upon receiving notification of rejection of funding. Please give as much detail as possible when emailing

Note: International fee status students are not eligible to pay by instalment.

#### **Full-time and structured part-time students:**

Where fees for a programme of study (within an academic year or within a semester) exceed £250, payment may be made by instalments, providing that:

- The fee is paid by up to six equal consecutive monthly payments.
- Full payment is made before the end of the academic year or before the end of the course (for those studying for less than a full academic year).

For late enrolments or shorter courses, the number of months will be reduced to ensure that the last payment is made no later than the end of their course or the end of the current academic year, whichever is earlier.



## Withdrawal from the college and tuition fee liability

Students withdrawing from their studies may be liable for all or part of their tuition fee or loan, depending on when they withdraw from the university.

### 6. Fee liability for withdrawn students

#### 6.1 Full-time students whose fees are paid by LEA (OIC) or through other UK student funding bodies.

Students who are funded by the LEA, SDS, Construction Skills, SFC, (SAAS PTFG, ITA200 part-time study only) or other UK student funding bodies are not eligible for refunds.

Funded students who withdraw from their course may be eligible for less or be ineligible for funding in the future.

The above may also apply to students who temporarily withdraw or have a leave of absence from their studies.

Students changing mode of study from full-time to part-time will be responsible for paying the relevant fee for the credits taken.

#### 6.2. Fees for withdrawn students or students whose fees are NOT paid by LEA (OIC) or other UK student funding bodies.

### General Principles

UHI Orkney will administer refunds in accordance with this policy.

Any reduction in fee liability for these students is governed by the following general principles:

- Only students whose fees are **not paid by the Local Education Authority (LEA), or covered by Skills Development Scotland (SDS), Construction Skills (CSkills) or SFC Fee Waiver** are eligible for a reduction in fee liability.
- Reductions are due only in those cases where the amount of fees paid exceeds the amount of fees due.
- The reduced amounts are based on the number of weeks teaching received (the more teaching received, the lower the reduction in fee liability); and
- There is a cut-off date in each semester after which full fees are payable.

**Fee charging schedule:** *This schedule is subject to any exceptions detailed elsewhere in the policy.*

Students withdrawing part-way through their course, will be subject to the fee charge schedule. In the case of withdrawal, refunds will only be granted:

- Once the withdrawal process has been completed.
- Where there is no outstanding debt to the college or any academic partner relating to tuition fees or any other fees.

**Students studying full-time or structured part-time and unstructured part-time including certificated evening classes.**

<b>Date of commencement</b>	<b>Withdrawal date</b>	<b>Fee liability</b>
Courses/modules commencing in August/September or at other dates	Within one week of course start i.e., 'false start'	No fee due for false start in first week
Courses/modules commencing in August/September	Before 01 November	£100 administration fee only
	Between 01 November and 01 February	50% of full fees plus £100 administration fee
	After 01 February	100% of the full fees, no £100 admin fee charged
Courses/modules commencing at other dates	Within eight (8) weeks of the date of commencement of the course (excluding non-teaching weeks)	£100 administration fees only
	Between eight (8) and twelve (12) weeks of the date of commencement of the course (excluding non-teaching weeks)	50% of full year's fees plus £100 administration fee
	After twelve (12) weeks of the date of commencement of the course (excluding non-teaching weeks)	100% of the full fees, no £100 admin fee charged

### 6.3 Short Courses

Orkney College UHI operates the following cancellation policy for short courses, where short courses are defined as two weeks or less in duration.

**Amount of course elapsed:**

None, student cancels or fails to attend on first/only day of course:

**Fee Liability / Refund:**

If more than 2 working days' notice is given – 100% refund on fees or no charge due.

If less than 2 working days' notice is given – 100% refund less admin fee or an admin charge if payment not already made.

If student fails to attend – no refund available, full course cost will be levied.

**Admin charges**

For courses costing up to £100 - £10

For courses costing between £100 and £300 – £30

For courses costing between £300 and £500 - £50

For courses costing £500 or more - £70

If a student cancels within 2 working days but wishes to re-book for the same or another course, then the admin fee will be waived.

#### **6.4 Non-Certificated Evening Classes**

Students who withdraw up to 50% of the way through the duration of the non-certificated evening class will be eligible for a 50% refund of the original cost, less an admin charge of £10. Withdrawal at or beyond 50% of the duration of the evening class will not be eligible for a refund.

#### **6.5 Specific Conditions**

The rest of this section lists specific conditions relating to the issue of fee liability. In cases not covered below, management discretion will be combined with an application of the above principles to reach a decision.

##### **6.5.1 International students:**

Fees are not refundable except at management discretion.

##### **6.5.2 Third Party sponsored students.**

Where a third party (e.g., a sponsoring employer) agrees to pay tuition fees, the fee liability will be reduced according to the schedule within this policy if the student withdraws, any refund of fees already paid will be made directly to the third party.

##### **6.5.3 Full refunds**

A full refund of tuition fees already paid or full reduction in fee liability will be available if the college is unable to provide the course.

Students who have paid in full for a course lasting more than one year are eligible for a full refund for any 'unused' years plus any reduction on fee liability for their current year of study subject to the schedule within this policy.

##### **6.5.5 Academic or other misconduct**

Students who lose registered status due to academic or other misconduct are not eligible for a reduction in their fee liability, other than full 'unused' years if they have paid in advance.

##### **6.5.6 Mitigating circumstances**

Consideration may be given to reducing fee liability for students who must withdraw due to exceptional mitigating circumstances as a result for example of serious illness or bereavement. Academic or financial difficulties are not normally regarded as reasons for reducing fee liability. The college will consider each case on merit.

## **6.6 Outstanding Debt**

Where an applicant has previously studied within the college and has an outstanding debt to the college or to any UHI academic partner, they will not be admitted (or re-admitted after a formal break in studies) to any programme until that outstanding debt is cleared. For clarity, applicants may be made an offer for a subsequent course in line with the FE/HE admissions policy and practices but will be required to clear any outstanding debt or have a payment plan in place before enrolling on the subsequent programme.

For continuing students, any outstanding debt should normally be cleared prior to enrolment in each academic year (for full-time or structured part-time students, semester to semester progression within an academic year is not subject to such constraint). In individual cases, the college may, at its discretion, permit re-enrolment subject to a plan being agreed with the student for recovery of the outstanding debt.

Where there is an outstanding debt, or non-compliance with a repayment plan, teaching may be stopped for that student until the debt is resolved. If the matter is not resolved the student will be formally withdrawn from the course.

## **6.7 Withholding certification in cases of outstanding tuition fee debt**

The college may withhold the final certificate for an award until any outstanding tuition fee debt has been cleared or the sum at issue has been consigned pending agreement, arbitration, or judicial hearing.

## **6.8 Debt collection**

Where tuition fees and other fees associated with engaging with the course of study are not paid by the due dates as agreed by the college and the student, a debt collection process will be initiated, which may incur a percentage increase to the debt owed. This could include the use of professional and reputable debt collection agents, together with interaction with government agencies as required, to collect outstanding sums.

## **6.9 Write Offs**

Write offs will be applied in accordance with Orkney Islands Council Financial Regulations.