Further Education Fee Waiver Policy

Policy reference number | SP001
Title | Further Education Fee Waiver Policy
Responsible committee and officer | Head of Finance
Original author: | Single Policy Framework
Current revision author: (if applicable) |

Approval

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Date approved</th>
<th>Approving committee</th>
<th>Individuals/groups to be notified (if relevant)</th>
<th>Committee officer signature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>18/12/18</td>
<td>Board of Management</td>
<td></td>
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Purpose/change

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Author</th>
<th>Purpose/change</th>
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<tr>
<td>01</td>
<td>18/12/18</td>
<td>Name</td>
<td>Document creation</td>
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</table>
This policy covers the 2019-20 academic year.
## Policy Summary

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Overview</th>
<th>This policy is required to set out a regional approach to Further Education Fee Waivers for Lews Castle College UHI and all academic partners in the University of the Highlands and Islands.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purpose</td>
<td>The policy will provide a framework for a consistent and coherent methodology for the awarding of Scottish Funding Council and discretionary fee waivers for further education courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Scope</td>
<td>This policy applies to all academic partners who run further education courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultation</td>
<td>This policy was developed by a Policy Ownership Group, made up of practitioners from across the University of the Highlands and Islands network. Endorsement was received from the Finance Directors Practitioner Group and Partnership Council, before the policy went through local consultation and approval by College Boards of Management.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementation and Monitoring</td>
<td>Academic partners will be responsible for implementing and monitoring the policy. Analysis will be carried out of the policy’s impact by staff from the Vice-Principal for Further Education’s office.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Risk Implications</td>
<td>The policy reduces risk for the University and academic partners by creating a streamlined process and a community of practice for staff. Students will also benefit from a consistent approach across all partners.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Link with Strategy</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Impact Assessment</td>
<td>Equality Impact Assessment: Assessed – No further action to be taken. Privacy Impact Assessment: n/a</td>
</tr>
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</table>
1. Policy Statement

1.1. This document sets out the policy for the awarding of Further Education fee waivers in Lews Castle College UHI. This policy refers to Scottish Funding Council policy and guidelines on fee waivers, which is reviewed annually. A position is also set out for the awarding of discretionary fee waivers from a College’s individual budget.

2. Definitions

2.1. Scottish Funding Council (“SFC”) - SFC is the national, strategic body that is responsible for funding teaching and learning provision, research and other activities in Scotland’s colleges and universities. SFC gives funding to colleges and universities with guidance on how the funds should be distributed to students.

3. Purpose

3.1. This policy sets outs a robust and transparent framework for the awarding Further Education course fee waivers at the College.

3.2. The policy will create an equality of experience for students across the partnership, whilst allowing individual colleges the flexibility to respond to local needs.

3.3. SFC Funded Fee Waivers
   The core of this policy is based on the SFC Guidance on Fee Waiver Grant Policy and any associated annexes and appendices. The current SFC Guidance can be accessed here. The majority of fee waivers will be funded by SFC.

3.4. Discretionary Fee Waivers
   Students attending the University of the Highlands and Islands will have a parity of experience through the use of SFC Fee Waivers. Under exceptional circumstances and subject to individual budgets, colleges have the power to award discretionary fee waivers.

3.4.1. Categories of Discretionary Fee Waivers include but are not limited to:

   - Staff development, where a course is an essential part of an approved staff development plan
   - Additional academic requirements, where the College stipulates compulsory completion of an additional qualification as part of the main course
   - Exceptional requirements, where College Senior Management identify a significant local benefit to use of Discretionary Fee Waivers
3.4.2. Colleges should endeavour to create parity of experiences for students across the region through their use of discretionary fee waivers.

3.4.3. Due consideration should be given to the impact of discretionary fee waiver usage on other colleges in the University of the Highlands and Islands partnership.

4. Scope

4.1. This Policy applies to all applicants for further education courses (full-time and part-time), except for the courses set out in Section 5 below.

4.2. Applicants for higher education courses should refer to the Higher Education Fees Policy. Higher education courses are normally Level 7 and above on the SCQF Framework.

5. Exceptions

5.1. Courses outwith the scope of this policy are:

- All leisure courses
- All commercial courses
- SVQ courses

5.2. Please refer to the accompanying Fee Waiver Procedures for further information and an eligibility flowchart.

6. Notification

6.1. Staff engaging with Fee Waivers should be familiar with this policy and all relevant SFC policies.

6.2. Annual changes to SFC policies will be cascaded to staff by line managers and hyperlinks in the policy updated to reflect the most recent guidance.

6.3. Any changes in SFC policy or national legislation will be reflected in this policy.

6.4. The policy will be publicly available on the College’s website, along with other current policies.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

7.1. The College’s most senior Financial Officer has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and the management of Fee Waivers, including the approval of Discretionary Fee Waivers.
7.2. Staff administering Fee Waivers are responsible for ensuring up-to-date SFC guidance is followed.

7.3. Awarding of Discretionary Fee Waivers will be recorded and reported on annually to the Finance Directors Practitioner Group.

8. Legislative Framework

Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005
Equality Act 2010
Scottish Government: Costs of Learning Student Funding Guide

9. Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines and Other Resources

9.1. This policy should be read in conjunction with SFC Fee Waiver policies and guidance. The up-to-date information can be accessed here.

9.2. University of the Highlands and Islands Further Education Fee Waiver Procedures

9.3. University of the Highlands and Islands Further Education Student Funding Support Policy

9.4. Lews Castle College UHI College Access and Inclusion Strategy – available here
University of the Highlands and Islands

Further Education Fee Waiver Procedures

The University of the Highlands and Islands operates to a common set of Further Education Fee Waiver procedures across all of the partnership. These procedures and key definitions are set out below.

| Fee: This is the cost of the course for which the student has applied. All further education courses have a fee attached to it. |
| Fee Waiver: Some students will be able to access a fee waiver, which means they will not have to pay their own fees. Eligibility for a fee waiver will be assessed at the start of the course, and the student may be required to produce evidence to support their application. |
| Fee Status: Fee status is the category a student falls into based upon their personal information. This will be one of: Home and EU, Rest of UK (RUK) or International. |

1. Applicants for courses will provide information on the application form that will be used to determine their fee status.

2. When students receive their offer letter, they will be advised what their fee status is based on the information they have provided.

3. If an applicant has any questions regarding the fee, their fee status or eligibility for a fee waiver, they should contact the college to which they are applying.

4. Full time students will complete the online enrolment form as part of the induction process. Students are asked ‘How will your course fees be paid?’ and select their response from a dropdown menu.

5. Part time students will be required to complete a paper Fee Waiver form and provide any required evidence to support their application.

6. Students who are applying for a fee waiver based upon receipt of a benefit will be asked to produce evidence to support their application. Students on multi-year courses will be expected to produce evidence in each year of the course.

7. Students who are self-financing their studies will be contacted by the college in order to arrange payment for their fees.

8. Some courses or modules of courses may be subject to discretionary fee waivers applied by the college. The Discretionary Fee Waiver form should be used and completed in full for all discretionary fee waivers applied for colleges.
# 2019-20 FURTHER EDUCATION FEE WAIVER FORM

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Name:</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Surname:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forename:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Address:</td>
<td>Date of Birth:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student Number:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post Code:</td>
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</table>

Please see overleaf for additional information to accompany this form.

## SECTION 1 – RESIDENCY

- [ ] I am ordinarily resident in Scotland on the date of commencement of study and have been ordinarily resident in the British Islands for the past three years and have settled status in the UK (please see overleaf for arrangements for Forces personnel and veterans)  
  
- [ ] I am a non-asylum seeker, living in Scotland, on a part-time ESOL course where my main purpose for being in the EU is not to receive education  
  
- [ ] I am an asylum seeker or the spouse/child of an asylum seeker living in Scotland on either a full-time ESOL course or a part-time non advanced or advanced course - as defined in Section 18 of the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002  

Please now select a relevant category under Section 2

## SECTION 2 – OTHER ELIGIBILITY CATEGORIES – please tick one of the boxes below:

### I am a benefit claimant in receipt of (please tick as appropriate):

- [ ] Disability Living Allowance  
- [ ] Incapacity Benefit  
- [ ] Attendance Allowance  
- [ ] Severe Disablement Allowance  
- [ ] Carer’s Allowance*  
- [ ] Contributory Employment and Support Allowance*  
- [ ] Personal Independence Payment

* See overleaf for further details

Please now select a relevant category under Section 2

### I or My family meet the low income threshold for 2019/20:

- [ ] Households with only one person - £8,282  
- [ ] Households consisting of a couple without children - £12,395  
- [ ] Households with dependent children - £18,977

Please now select a relevant category under Section 2

### I am under 26 and care experienced e.g. looked after and in the care of the local authority and can include situations such as living in a foster home, children’s home, residential home, in kinship care or in the care of the local authority in their own home

Please now select a relevant category under Section 2

### I am a state school pupil attending College as part of my school programme

Please now select a relevant category under Section 2

Please provide a copy of your Benefits Letter

Please provide a copy of your Tax Credit Award Notice and P60s

Please provide a letter from the Social Work Department

Please provide a letter from your school giving permission for you to attend college and confirming subject not available within the school curriculum

Student Signature: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________  
Staff Signature: ___________________________ Date: ___________________________

## SECTION 3 - ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
FORCES PERSONNEL AND VETERANS

Forces personnel and veterans are treated as being resident in the country in which they were ordinarily resident before they “signed up/enlisted”. If they are ordinarily resident in Scotland but are serving overseas, they would also be eligible. Family members of serving forces personnel and veterans are also considered eligible in the country in which the serving forces personnel was ordinarily resident.

Please note that fee waiver grant cannot be used for any student being supported through the Enhanced Learning Credits scheme (ELCAS).

ELIGIBLE BENEFITS

The benefits eligible to qualify for fee waiver are listed overleaf. However please note the following:

Carer’s Allowance – if a carer has an underlying entitlement to Carer’s Allowance but this has been given up, e.g. to claim their pension, then they are still eligible.

Contributory Employment and Support Allowance – this also includes people whose Contributory Employment and Support Allowance has ended due to the time-limiting nature of this benefit but who remained entitled to National Insurance credits for incapacity.

ASYLUM SEEKERS

To meet the criteria for eligibility as an asylum seeker, the student’s asylum application (their own or their family’s) must have been made prior to the end of 2006, and the student must:

• have been under 18 at the time of application for asylum
• have been resident in Scotland and under 25 on 1 August/January/April or July (whichever was closest to the beginning of the course)
• have been resident in Scotland for a minimum period of three years.

INCOME THRESHOLDS

Where there has been a material reduction in income from the previous financial tax year, the taxable income of the student’s family in the current financial tax year can be assessed. This reduction requires to be evidenced by provision of relevant financial information.

LIMITS TO FEE WAIVER GRANT

Additional part-time activity over and above full-time study will not be eligible for a fee waiver grant.

Students taking two or more part-time courses will be eligible for a maximum of one full-time fee waiver. This equates to the following:

• the FE fee of £1,008 for students taking FE courses
• the FE fee of £1,008 for students taking a mix of FE and part-time HE courses (fee waiver only applicable on FE element)

GENERAL INFORMATION

There is no upper/lower age limit on a student’s eligibility for fee waiver.

Fee waiver cannot be claimed for Commercial or New Deal courses.

THIS FORM MUST BE SUBMITTED TO STUDENT RECORDS BEFORE THE FIRST 25% OF THE COURSE HAS BEEN COMPLETED
Further Education Discretionary Fee Waiver
Application Form

Student Details

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Number</th>
<th>Student Name</th>
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</thead>
</table>

Full Course Fee Waiver

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Code/Block/Occurrence</th>
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</table>

Module Fee Waiver

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Please list all modules applicable to waiver</th>
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Justification


Departmental Approval

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Department</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Line Manager Authorisation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
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Director of Finance Approval

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Signature</td>
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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
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</table>

COMPLETED FORMS TO BE RETURNED TO RELEVANT DEPARTMENT FOR PROCESSING

REFER TO FEE WAIVER DECISION TREE FOR GUIDANCE