

Further Education (FE) Fee Waiver Policy

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EIA	Yes
Lead Officer	Director of Finance & Estates
Review Officer	Accountant

Version Control History

Reviewer	Date of Change	Summary of Revisions made
Fee Waiver Policy Ownership Group	May 2018	New single policy
Fee Waiver Policy Ownership Group	March 2021	Various formatting and grammatical changes through policy; 2.1: Clarity added around source of funding; 2.2: New definition added; 3.3: 'approved by college added'; 3.4: ' for the college to pay the course fees' added; 3.4.1: changes to three bullet points for clarity, including removal of 'significant' and addition of '(being cognisant of 3.4.3)' in third bullet point; 3.5: New section added bringing SVQs into scope of policy; 5.1: SVQs removed from exceptions, and additional information added to other exceptions; 7.3: section removed. 9.4 and 9.5: Removed Access and Inclusion Strategy and added HE Fees Policy and FE Fees Policy.
Review Officer	June 2022	SFC link updated for academic year 2022-23.
Finance team	August 2023	SFC link updated for academic year 2023-24. Section 10 Other conditions added – from 10.1 to 10.7.
Director of Finance & Estates	May 2025	Job titles updated throughout document
Accountant	April 2026	Updated from AY 2025/26 to AY 2026/27 throughout document Section 3 Purpose amended 3.1 to at' UHI Inverness Section 10 Other conditions added 10.7 'As per the SFC Fee Waiver Guidance AY 2025-26, the maximum amounts claimable for each student is: (may be subject to change, as SFC guidance not published for AY 2026-27 at policy review date)'

1. Policy Statement

This document sets out the policy for the awarding of further education fee waivers in UHI Inverness. 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. Legislative Framework / Related Policies

2.1. Legislative Framework

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

2.2. Publicly available UHI Inverness policies and procedures can be accessed via our website: [About us – Publications](#). Staff and Board Members can access the full range of internal policies and procedures through the Quality SharePoint site. UHI Policies can be accessed here: [Policies and regulations - Policies](#).

- UHI Further Education Fee Waiver Procedures
- UHI Further Education Student Funding Support Policy
- UHI Higher Education Fees Policy
- UHI Further Education Fees Policy

2.3. This policy should be read in conjunction with SFC Fee Waiver policies and guidance. The up-to-date information can be accessed on the UHI Inverness website.

3. Definitions

3.1. 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 provides funding that colleges can claim for fee waivers.

3.2. Fee waiver: Some students will be able to access a fee waiver, which means they will not have to pay their own course 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.

4. Purpose

4.1. This policy sets out a robust and transparent framework for the awarding further education course fee waivers at UHI Inverness.

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

4.3. **SFC Funded Fee Waivers**

The core of this policy is based on the SFC Fee Waiver Policy, associated annexes and appendices. The current SFC Fee Waiver Policy can be accessed on the UHI Inverness website. The majority of fee waivers will be approved by the college and funded by SFC.

4.4. **Discretionary Fee Waivers**

Students attending UHI 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 and for the college to pay the course fees.

4.4.1. 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;
- Where the college stipulates compulsory completion of an additional qualification as part of the main course;
- Exceptional requirements, where college senior management identify a local benefit to use of Discretionary Fee Waivers (being cognisant of 3.4.3).

4.4.2. Colleges should endeavour to create parity of experiences for students across the region through their use of discretionary fee waivers.

4.4.3. Due consideration should be given to the impact of discretionary fee waiver usage on other colleges in UHI.

4.5. **SVQs**

4.5.1. Students undertaking a part-time SVQ as a condition of their employment will not be awarded a fee waiver. In these circumstances, the employer is normally expected to meet the cost of the fees.

4.5.2. Students undertaking a SVQ where it is not a condition of their employment may be eligible for a fee waiver dependent on the course and their personal circumstances.

4.5.3. For students undertaking a part-time SVQ regardless of whether it is a condition of employment, their eligibility for fee waivers on additional courses will be assessed according to the current SFC Fee Waiver Policy, associated annexes and appendices.

5. Scope

- 5.1. 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.
- 5.2. 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](#).
- 5.3. This policy is a cross wide college policy; and all staff must work to meet the requirements outlined within the policy. Compliance with the Policy will be monitored through regular audits, with outcome reports being reported to the appropriate committee.

6. Exemptions

- 6.1. Courses outwith the scope of this policy are:
- Any non-credit bearing leisure courses, designed for hobby or personal interest
 - All commercial courses, designed and delivered for a particular business/industry
- 6.2. Please refer to the accompanying Fee Waiver Procedures and eligibility flowchart for further information.

7. Notification

- 7.1. Staff engaging with fee waivers should be familiar with this policy and all relevant SFC policies.
- 7.2. 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.
- 7.3. Any changes in SFC policy or national legislation will be reflected in this policy.
- 7.4. The policy will be publicly available on the UHI Inverness website, along with other current policies.

8. Roles and Responsibilities

- 8.1. 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.

8.2. Staff administering fee waivers are responsible for ensuring up-to-date SFC guidance is followed.

9. Other Conditions

9.1. The burden of proof is on the student to satisfy the college with evidence of the eligibility of their status. If the circumstances of the student change during the course so that the student becomes eligible for a part-time fee waiver when they were not previously, the college can (at their discretion) claim back the full fee from SFC and reimburse the student. The change must occur and be reported to the college by the student before the 'required date', which for AY 2026-27 is:

- For courses of 20 weeks or less: the date where 25% of the length of course has elapsed; and
- For courses of more than 20 weeks: 5 weeks after the course start date.

9.2. Please refer to SFC's Credit Guidance AY 2026-27 for more information.

9.3. Changes to student circumstances occurring after this date cannot be claimed back from SFC. However, colleges are free to use their own discretion with college funds.

9.4. There is no upper or lower age limit on a student's eligibility for a fee waiver.

9.5. The college will be able to apply a fee waiver in respect of students who satisfy the eligibility rules for the course (as defined in the Credit Guidance), where the college is claiming credits for their activity in the current AY.

9.6. With the exception of any fee waivers for state school pupils who are undertaking college activities that form part of their school-based curriculum, additional part-time activity over and above full-time study will not be eligible for a fee waiver, although it may be eligible for credits (to determine if additional part-time activity is eligible, please refer to the Credit Guidance).

9.7. Students taking two or more part-time courses will be eligible for a maximum of one full-time fee waiver. As per the SFC Fee Waiver guidance AY 2025-26, The maximum amounts claimable for each student will be: (may be subject to change, as SFC guidance not published for AY 2026-27 at policy review date)

- The FE fee (£1,008 in AY 2026-27) for students taking FE courses.
- The FE fee (£1,008 in AY2026-27) for students taking a mix of FE and part-time HE courses.

- The HE fee (£1,285 in AY2026-27) for students taking part-time HE courses - fee waivers should not be claimed for full-time HE courses, as these are funded through [Student Awards Agency Scotland \(SAAS\)](#).