

UHI | INVERNESS

Inverness College UHI

Further Education Fee Waiver Policy

PL/CS/2023/005

Lead Officer (Post):	Director of Finance
Responsible Office/ Department:	Finance
Responsible Committee:	Finance & General Purposes Committee
Review Officer (Post):	Finance Manager
Date policy last reviewed and updated:	03/10/2023
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Date policy approved:	03/10/2023
Date of Equality Impact Assessment:	August 2023

This policy covers the 2023-24 academic year.

For all our up-to-date policies, please visit our website [UHI Inverness](https://www.uhi.ac.uk).

Accessible versions of this policy are available upon request.

Policy Summary

Overview	This policy is required to set out a regional approach to Further Education Fee Waivers for Inverness College UHI and all academic partners in UHI.
Purpose	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.
Scope	This policy applies to all academic partners who run further education courses.
Consultation	This policy was developed by a Policy Ownership Group, made up of practitioners from across UHI. Endorsement was received from Partnership Council, before the policy went through local consultation and approval by college Boards of Management.
Implementation and Monitoring	Academic partners will be responsible for implementing and monitoring the policy.
Risk Implications	The policy reduces risk for the university and partners by creating a streamlined process and a community of practice for staff. Students will also benefit from a consistent approach across all partners.
Link with Strategy	Links with our obligations under the Regional Outcome Agreement.
Impact Assessment	Equality Impact Assessment: Assessed – No further action to be taken.
	Privacy Impact Assessment: n/a

1. Policy Statement

- 1.1 This document sets out the policy for the awarding of further education fee waivers in Inverness 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 provides funding that colleges can claim for fee waivers.
- 2.2 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.

3. Purpose

- 3.1 This policy sets out a robust and transparent framework for the awarding of further education course fee waivers at Inverness College UHI.
- 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 Fee Waiver Policy, associated annexes and appendices. The current SFC Fee Waiver Policy can be accessed [here](#). The majority of fee waivers will be approved by the college and funded by SFC.

3.4 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.

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;
- 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).

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 UHI.

3.5 SVQs

3.5.1 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.

3.5.2 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.

3.5.3 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.

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:

- Any non-credit bearing leisure courses, designed for hobby or personal interest
- All commercial courses, designed and delivered for a particular business/industry

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

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 Inverness College UHI'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.

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 UHI Further Education Fee Waiver Procedures
- 9.3 UHI Further Education Student Funding Support Policy
- 9.4 [UHI Higher Education Fees Policy](#)
- 9.5 UHI Further Education Fees Policy (Forthcoming)

10. Other Conditions

10.1 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 2023-24 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.

10.2 Please refer to SFC's [Credit Guidance](#) AY 2023-24 for more information.

10.3 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.

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

10.5 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.

10.6 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).

10.7 Students taking two or more part-time courses will be eligible for a maximum of one full-time fee waiver. The maximum amounts claimable for each student will be:

- The FE fee (£1,008 in AY 2023-24) for students taking FE courses.
- The FE fee (£1,008 in AY 2023-24) for students taking a mix of FE and part-time HE courses.
- The HE fee (£1,285 in AY 2023-24) 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 \(SAAS\)](#).

11. Version Control and Change History

Version	Date	Endorsed by	Amendment(s)	Author
0	May 2018	Partnership Council	New single policy	Fee Waiver Policy Ownership Group
1	March 2021	Partnership Council	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.	Fee Waiver Policy Ownership Group
2	June 2022	UHI Inverness	SFC link updated for academic year 2022-23.	Review Officer
3	August 2023	UHI Inverness	SFC link updated for academic year 2023-24. Section 10 Other conditions added – from 10.1 to 10.7.	Finance team