

Policy title	Tuition Fee Policy
Version number	2.0
Effective from date	23 rd April 2024
Applicable to	Students for whom the University charges and receives payment for tuition fees, even if paid by a sponsor (e.g., Student Loans Company, employer or apprenticeship levy).
Owner	Director of Finance & Planning
Date EIA completed	16 th April 2024
Approving Committee(s)	University Board Executive Committee
Date of approval	23 rd April 2024
Review date	April 2025

1. Introduction

- 1.1. The University charges tuition fees annually against an agreed schedule of prices. Therefore, tuition fees are liable to change year on year but are set at least two years in advance and published alongside course information on the University's website and prospectus.
- 1.2. The University Board has overall responsibility for the University's tuition fees and policy, and reviews both annually.
- 1.3. Words in **bold** (excluding section headings) relate to a policy or document which can be found on the University website.

2. Setting fees

- 2.1. Regulated fees: The Office for Students (OfS) set maximum fees chargeable for the following courses for home students: Bachelor/Undergraduate degree, Foundation degree, Foundation year (year 0), Higher National Certificate/Diploma (HNC/HND), Postgraduate Initial Teacher Training, Accelerated degrees, overseas study and sandwich years.
- 2.2. Apprenticeships: The Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) sets maximum fee rates a provider can charge for a particular course which can be claimed from the apprentice levy. Charges over this need to be claimed directly from the relevant employer. The University, provided it can justify the full charge in accordance with ESFA guidance, sets fees at the maximum fee rate.
- 2.3. Unregulated fees: This includes all masters programmes, fees for overseas/international students, and fees for Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and non-credit bearing courses.
- 2.4. Fee levels and uplifts for unregulated fees will be calculated taking into consideration:
 - Competitor benchmarking based on market conditions
 - Any specific costs of provision
 - Availability and level of financing options for students
- 2.5. Exceptional changes to tuition fees or the application of the tuition fees policy may be made by the Director of Finance & Planning, with any changes reported to Board as part of the next update. Exceptional is not expected to extend beyond changes to the regulatory environment, correction of mistakes, or clarification to avoid future confusion.

3. Calculating fees

- 3.1. The tuition fee for each student is determined by the course, level, mode of study, the number of academic credits that the student is taking, and the student's fee status, less any scholarships.
- 3.2. Part-time tuition fees are set pro-rata to the number of credits being studied against the number of credits and fee for the same full-time course. Not all courses are available on a part-time basis.
- 3.3. Tuition fees may be reduced where a student can demonstrate **Recognition of Prior Learning** (RPL) as evidenced under the University's policy. Students should be aware that reducing the number of credits studied in a year may affect student financing.

- 3.4. Regulations to determine a student's fee status as Home or Overseas are available on the UK Council for International Student Affairs website at www.ukcisa.org.uk. It is the student's responsibility to provide any documentation necessary to satisfy the University that they are eligible for home fee status. Fee status will be determined at admission and apply for the duration of the student's course.
- 3.5. Should a student believe their fee status has changed (e.g., following a successful application for UK citizenship) then they may apply to have their status reassessed. The University reserves the right to charge for any reassessments. Revised fees will only apply from the point of reassessment and will not be backdated.
- 3.6. Students may apply for any University **scholarships** they are eligible for. **Scholarships** are agreed annually and are used to reduce the level of tuition fee charged to the student. This may impact on other financing options.
- 3.7. **Bursaries** provided by the University and any external bodies are paid to support students with maintenance costs and do not reduce the tuition fee charged. The University reserves the right to offset any **bursary** payments it makes against any overdue fees.
- 3.8. University of Suffolk staff and staff teaching University courses at East Coast College and Suffolk New College may undertake courses at a reduced or zero rate, provided they are agreed as part of the staff member's development plan. Please refer to the relevant organisation's staff development policy for eligibility and repayment conditions (the hub for University of Suffolk staff).
- 3.9. A University of Suffolk **alumni discount** is available on tuition fees for certain postgraduate and CPD courses.
- 3.10. If, under the terms of the course's Framework and Regulations, the student is required to retake a module and defer progression, a retake fee will be charged on the same basis as if the student were part-time. Students are advised to contact SLC for advice on retake fees and loan finance.
- 3.11. Some courses may have additional fees associated with trips, consumables, or residential, which will be specified in the **Definitive Course Record** (DCR). These will be charged separately and do not constitute tuition fees for the purpose of this policy.

4. Payment of fees

- 4.1. Students remain ultimately liable for the payment of all tuition fees, regardless of any sponsor or financing arrangements, except for apprenticeships where the employer is liable.
- 4.2. Fees for the year will be invoiced upon course start date and are due within 30 days of the invoice date unless an alternative payment plan is agreed. The University reserves the right to amend fees charged should any errors or omissions be discovered.
- 4.3. All fees issued by the University must be paid to the University, regardless of location of study, and must be made in £ sterling. The preferred method of payment is bank transfer or direct debit for students on a payment plan. The University does not accept cash.
- 4.4. Home undergraduate students who expect all or part of their fees to be paid by a loan from the Student Loans Company (SLC) must apply for student loan finance prior to each year of study. The University will be notified by the SLC of students who have financing, and their fees will be paid directly to the University by SLC.

- 4.5. It is the student's responsibility to keep the SLC and University up to date with any changes in circumstances and ensure their financing remains in place for their course. Students must complete enrolment with the University of Suffolk to become eligible for any maintenance loans, and tuition fee loans are conditional on continued engagement and attendance by the student.
- 4.6. Postgraduate students may apply for student finance to cover maintenance costs. Tuition fees must therefore be paid directly to the University and the student will be classified as a self-paying student.
- 4.7. Overseas students who require a visa to study in the UK must pay a deposit to secure their place on a chosen programme of study in order to receive a Confirmation of Acceptance for Studies (CAS). The level of deposit will be agreed each year, based on perceived sponsorship risk, alongside tuition fees and scholarships.
- 4.8. Overseas students who require a visa are also required to provide appropriate evidence that they have sufficient funds to cover tuition fees and living expenses upon application for the first year of their course. This evidence must meet UKVI financial evidence requirements.
- 4.9. Where an overseas student has their visa rejected, their deposit will be refunded, subject to the provision of appropriate evidence of the rejection, and that it was not on the grounds of failure to follow UKVI guidance or the submission of fraudulent documents.
- 4.10. Overseas students may agree a payment plan, typically expected to be 50% at the first liability point (see section 5 below) and 50% at the second liability point. CAS deposits will reduce the balance to be paid.
- 4.11. Fees payable by sponsors will only be agreed upon receipt of official acceptance from the sponsor e.g., a purchase order, University of Suffolk Invoice Authorisation Form (IAF) or apprenticeship agreement.
- 4.12. Payment plans may be agreed with all other self-funding students i.e. excluding overseas and SLC funded tuition fees. Payment may only be spread over a maximum of 9 months from the course start date to ensure there is no impact on the student's progression and graduation, except for PhD students who may pay over 12 months
- 4.13. Payment plans will be reassessed for changes that affect the total chargeable tuition fee. Missed payments will result in the payment amounts being adjusted to meet the original payment deadline and not extended. Any other changes remain at the discretion of the Director of Finance & Planning.
- 4.14. Failure to pay tuition fees may result in the following sanctions:
 - Removal of access to the University's facilities
 - Withholding of any payment due from the University e.g., bursaries
 - Withholding of any results, certificates of award or transcripts
 - Withholding of invitation to graduation ceremonies
 - Withdrawal from the course and a bar on enrolling on any other courses awarded by the University
 - Suspension of UK visa and barring of re-entry into the UK
 - Referral to a debt collection agency, subsequent legal action and County Court Judgements on the student's credit history

- 4.15. For the avoidance of doubt, a student is not considered a debtor and no sanctions will be applied where full payment has been received in the University's bank account or where a payment plan has been agreed and is being adhered to.
- 4.16. However, no student may enrol into the next year of study while tuition fees remain outstanding, even if a payment plan has been agreed. This is to ensure the student does not continue to build up debt they are unable to repay.

5. Refunds and Liability Points

- 5.1. Students have the right to withdraw, intercalate or change/transfer from a course of study and this may trigger a refund of fees:
- Withdraw – a student may voluntarily leave a course of study, or, following a period of suspension, be required to leave. Return to study is only possible through a new successful application
 - Intercalating – taking a break from study for an authorised reason – charges will apply up to the liability point at which the student intercalated. The student will be charged the remaining fees for the academic year when they return to study
 - Current continuing – where a student has outstanding submissions - no charge until the student re-joins the course, although the student is also ineligible for a student finance loan while current continuing
- 5.2. All notifications to change must be via official University of Suffolk processes and forms. The date of submission of this form by the student will be used to calculate the fee liability.
- 5.3. The University reserves the right to suspend a student for lack of engagement or attendance, academic misconduct, failure to pass an annual progression review, or non-payment of tuition fees. The last date of engagement will be used to calculate the liability point.
- 5.4. Liability points are calculated as per the table below:

Home students	Course start date		
	Aug - Dec	Jan – Mar	Apr - Jul
1 - 25% of fee	Day 14 after course start date	Day 14 after course start date	Day 14 after course start date
2 – 50% of fee	Day 1 of return from Christmas break	Day 1 of return from Easter break	Day 1 of return from summer break
3 – 100% of fee	Day 1 of return from Easter break	Day 1 of return from summer break	Day 1 of return from Christmas break

Overseas	Course start date		
Liability Point	Aug - Dec	Jan – Mar	Apr - Jul
1 - 80% of fee	Day 14 after course start date	Day 14 after course start date	Day 14 after course start date
2 – 100% of fee	Day 1 of return from Christmas break	Day 1 of return from Easter break	Day 1 of return from summer break

- 5.5. Postgraduate research (PhD) students are refunded pro-rata to number of months attended.
- 5.6. Refunds for CPD and other short courses are available up until the earlier of 14 days after the start of the course or the date of course completion.
- 5.7. Refunds will only be made on money actually paid, so will exclude any outstanding amounts, discounts or scholarships which reduce the tuition fee. Non-refundable deposits are also excluded.
- 5.8. Money Laundering Regulations require refund payments to be made to the account from which the payment was originally made. This includes where the payment was made from either the SLC or a sponsor.
- 5.9. Refunds to overseas students are subject to administration fees, and only on the basis the University is satisfied the student has not breached the terms of their visa sponsorship.
- 5.10. If a course is closed or provision is withdrawn and a suitable alternative course is not available, then a full refund of all tuition fees paid for the year in which the course is closed will be made. Bursaries already paid will be honoured. The University will also compensate students for any additional travel costs due to a change of study location, and maintenance costs for transfers or lost time as per the University's **Student Protection Plan**.
- 5.11. The University, SLC, professional statutory regulatory bodies, employers and sponsors require regular engagement and attendance from students. Failure to adhere to the **Student Attendance and Engagement Monitoring Policy** will result in the student being withdrawn from their course. Any SLC maintenance and tuition fee loans will be suspended, and for overseas students a report will be made to the Home Office which may result in withdrawal of sponsorship and the revocation of the student's permission to stay in the UK.
- 5.12. In the event of fire, strike, lock-out, accident, civil disturbance, pandemic, or any other cause whatsoever beyond the University's control, the University will provide suitable alternative provision for continuation of learning, including online provision, and will not be liable for refund of fees, or any other financial penalty, unless alternative provision cannot be made.