

Fee Policy 2024-2025

Overview

This document sets out the 2024-25 fee policy for learners on WEA courses (including branch provision).

WEA is dedicated to ensuring all adults can access high quality education in an affordable and flexible way. Our course fee structure is designed to meet Department for Education (“DfE”) rules, but still allow for locally-driven course fee decisions and provision of a financial support package.

WEA charges a course fee to learners where their personal circumstances don’t meet the Education & Skills Funding Agency’s or their respective Mayoral Combined Authority criteria for funding rules which support full fee remission. Charging a course fee is not only a requirement of our funders but also an important way for WEA to generate income to enable continued delivery of its educational mission and maintain financial sustainability.

Adult Skills Fund (ASF) Courses

This section applies to all adult skills courses which are funded through either the Education Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), or Mayoral Combined Authority (MCA) grants and contracts. Further guidance is provided for other types of provision below.

The ESFA and each MCA maintain a list of eligibility criteria for fee remission or reduction, and these sometimes differ between funders. Learners will be asked to provide suitable evidence matched to the relevant criteria.

Accredited Provision

Courses where learning leads to a formal, recognised qualification (certificated by an external awarding body) fall under ESFA’s formula funded methodology and will attract set fees in a small number of circumstances. In some MCAs, this provision will also include a number of non-accredited support learning activities, which may also attract set fees in some circumstances.

English and Maths qualifications to Level 2 are free for most learners, as are Essential Digital Skills qualifications to Level 1. Many skills courses are free to learners who are aged 19 – 23.

Accredited (and non-accredited formula funded courses in some MCAs) are fully funded by the Government if the learner is over 23 years old and unemployed, subject to some terms and conditions relating to the learner’s residency status. For learners over the age

of 23, funding eligibility thresholds apply based on the learner's living location. For the latest eligibility criteria please visit [Low income & fee remissions | WEA](#).

To evidence income, the WEA must receive evidence of the learner's gross annual wages. This could be a wage slip or a UC statement within 3 months of the learner's learning start date, or a current employment contract which states gross monthly/annual wages. In addition to the above, learners pursuing qualification at or below Level 2 are eligible for funding only if the qualification being pursued has not been achieved before.

Where the learner doesn't meet the criteria for a funded course, ESFA or the MCA will provide 50% of the course cost and the learner will be required to pay course fees for the remaining 50%. These fees are set out in the course information. In exceptional circumstances, we will be able to use funding from our hardship fund to assist with course fees for learners who need financial support to start or stay in learning.

Due to the devolution of Adult Skills Fund to MCAs, some additional restrictions on free courses may also apply. Please check with the Learner Support team for further information.

Tailored Learning Provision

The minimum hourly rate a learner will pay for face-to-face WEA courses in 2024/25 will be £4.20/hour. For online provision, there is a standard fixed hourly rate of £3.70. This minimum rate applies to all courses, including day schools and tasters. Differential fee setting may be considered where there is specific evidence of localised need based on local income levels. Such fees must be reasonable and be formally agreed by the relevant Contract and Relationship Manager prior to marketing and recruitment.

Principles for fee setting for Tailored Learning provision:

- Course fees are set at the *hourly rate multiplied by the number of course hours. Any additional costs associated with the course must be specified (i.e., materials that the learners need to purchase and bring to the course) and clearly communicated to learners prior to enrolment.
- Courses which are charged at a rate higher than the standard regional hourly rate (i.e., courses which have additional cost requirements, e.g. arts equipment) must be publicised as such.
- All fee-paying learners must be charged the minimum hourly rate set.
- Learners should be offered the option of paying above the hourly rate if they wish to do so and they can do this by making a donation using the link provided below: <http://www.wea.org.uk/get-involved/donate>

Course fees are charged where learners' personal circumstances don't meet the criteria for full fee remission through the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) or the Mayoral Combined Authority where the learner resides. The ESFA and MCAs provide a list of eligibility criteria for fee remission or reduction, and you may be asked to provide evidence matched to these criteria where applicable.

For courses delivered in partnership with the Coalfields' Regeneration Trust all Tailored Learning course fees will be set to zero.

Late joiners

The full course fee is payable by late joiners, except where a place was unavailable to a learner at the course start date due to circumstances solely and exclusively within the WEA's control. In this case a pro-rata fee is payable based on the remaining course hours at the learner's joining date

Places for carers accompanying learners

Carers accompanying learners attend courses in a carer capacity not a learner one. Carers must not be asked to complete an enrolment form, included in the course register, counted in course learner numbers, or charged a course fee.