

Pound Plus – Community Learning Fee Policy

OWNED BY		Faculty Head for Adult Learning				
DATE OF LAST REVIEW		June 2021				
PLANNED NEXT REVIEW		June 2025				
APPROVAL		SLT				
APPLIES TO	Staff		Student	✓	Public	✓

Introduction

All courses are funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency. In order to receive this money, we must ensure that public funding is focused on people who need it most, those least likely to participate in learning. We therefore collect fees from people who can afford to pay, unless otherwise prescribed by the ESFA, and use these to extend provision to those who cannot. In addition, we will look to increase the value of funding received for Community Learning using the principles of Pound Plus by working closely with partners to access free or reduced cost accommodation and resources to support learners.

What is Community Learning?

The purpose of Community Learning is to develop the skills, confidence, motivation and resilience of adults of different ages and backgrounds in order to:

- progress towards formal learning or employment and/or
- improve their health and well-being, including mental health and/or
- develop stronger communities

Community Learning Courses fall under the following four strands:

- **Personal and Community Development Learning** - learning for personal and community development, cultural enrichment, intellectual or creative stimulation and for enjoyment (in most cases not leading to a formal qualification)
- **Family English, Maths and Language** - learning to improve the English language and maths skills of parents, carers or guardians and their ability to help their children
- **Wider Family Learning** - learning to help different generations of family members to learn together how to support their children's learning
- **Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities** - supports local Voluntary and other third sector organisations to develop their capacity to deliver learning opportunities for the residents of disadvantaged neighbourhoods

Pound Plus

Pound Plus is a term used by the Education and Skills Funding Agency to describe additional income or added value generated by providers of adult education over and above the core Adult Education Budget. It is important because generating additional income allows us to maximise the value of public investment and is used to increase the service we can provide to residents

Pound Plus can include:

- Appropriate fees income
- Access to accommodation at no or reduced costs
- The use of volunteers
- The use of shared resources
- Donations of equipment
- Access to other funding sources or equipment

What we do

Our aim is to maximise the funding grant allocated by the ESFA and increase the value to enable the delivery of a high-quality community learning service that meets the needs of the individual learners in our community.

Cirencester College recognises its responsibility to add value to the grant received and that it should take appropriate action to attract additional income (actual or in kind), and reduce costs to widen the offer available to disadvantaged learners who otherwise may not be able to afford course fees.

Generating Pound Plus

The College offers a balanced portfolio of courses that reflects the needs of the local community and is open to all adults. This includes bespoke provision designed to meet specific needs of learners and/or communities, such as individuals with multiple barriers to learning and the world of work, and those from deprived communities.

A differentiated fees policy is in place which includes a mix of fee-paying public courses and free targeted provision. This ensures that all adults have the opportunity to access learning, including the most affluent and the most disadvantaged.

Its main elements include: -

- Fee Income from courses
- Grants,
- Contributions in kind
- Volunteer activities
- Sharing services and/or pooling of resources

Fees and charges

There will be no charges made to our learners for the following provision:

- Functional Skills English & Maths
- GCSE English & Maths and programmes leading to the same
- Essential Digital Skills Courses

For other provision, falling under the 'Community Learning' strand we may ask our learners to provide a contribution towards the cost of their course. The College uses an hourly rate, which is lower than that

charged to adult learners for other accredited provision delivered at the College. The hourly rate for the 2021-22 academic year is £5.00 per hour.

For some courses, there may be additional charges to cover materials. These may either be charged at the point of enrolment or require learners to provide their own resources each week, e.g. cookery, floristry, arts and crafts, etc.

Learner Subsidies

As part of our 'Pound Plus' commitment, the College will fully waive fees for evidenced unemployed people/learners in receipt of one of the following benefits:

- Job Seekers Allowance
- Employment Support Allowance
- Income Support
- Universal Credit (work related)

Other learners may also be exempt from fees at the discretion of the provider. These may include full time carers of adults, refugees and asylum seekers, individual members of Families First, care leavers, members of the GRT community, homeless residents or those at risk of homelessness.

This is not an exhaustive list; would-be learners who think they may be eligible for fee exemption should contact the Adult Education Team directly.

Monitoring

The College will carry out regular reviews through our quality processes and self-assessment.