



## **SMB Group**

### **Higher Education Fees Policy**

**Applicable for all higher education  
courses within the Academic Year**

**2023/2024**

## **1.0. Introduction**

- 1.1 The Higher Education and Research Act (HERA) 2017 was enacted in 2017 and created a regulatory framework for Higher Education (HE) with the aim to increase competition, student choice, ensure value for money and strengthen the research sector. It is a replacement to the Further and Higher Education Act 1992. The Office for Students (OfS) are the appointed regulator of HE within the UK.
- 1.2 The role of the OfS is; to help students get into and succeed in HE, help students stay informed, make sure they get a high-quality education that prepares them for the future and protect student's interests. The OfS introduced a limit on tuition fees to ensure that students do not pay more than they need to. Approved providers must not charge above limits set by government. SMB Group is an approved provider on the OfS Register of Higher Education providers.
- 1.3 Mandatory fee limits are in set out in accordance with Schedule 2 of HERA, which determines that fee limits are based on the provision of an access and participation plan (APP), and in accordance with the TEF (Teaching Excellence Framework) award, where this is in operation. The SMB Group's APP is published on the SMB Group website for open access.
- 1.4 The Student Loans Company (SLC) is a non-profit making Government-owned organisation with the main aim of providing loans and grants to students in universities and colleges in the UK. This also includes the provision of bursaries and scholarships.
- 1.5 SMB Group aim to support all students accessing higher education and recognises that financial affordability can be a barrier to students choosing to progress to higher level study. Due to this, SMB Group do not charge fees associated with the maximum fee limit. The group aims to keep the fees equitable for all students choosing to attend SMB Group for their higher-level study.

## **2.0 General Principles**

- 2.1 The HE Fee policy of SMB Group aims to:
  - 2.1.1 Be simple to explain;
  - 2.1.2 Take into account of the ability of students to pay;
  - 2.1.3 Take into account regulatory advice and guidance
  - 2.1.4 Take into account competitor pricing;
  - 2.1.5 Ensure that the HE courses offered remain financially viable and reduce the financial burden;
  - 2.1.6 Incorporate a flexible element to allow students and the College to adapt to changing circumstances;
  - 2.1.7 Comply with contractual requirements and ensure alignment, where appropriate, with partner Universities;

### 3.0 Higher Education courses

3.1 The OfS publish annual guidance for fee limits which can change from year to year. This will be reflected through an annual update to the HE Tuition Fee Policy.

3.2 The below fees are based on the following assumptions that SMB Group has an APP in place which it is currently approved and in operation. All fees are set in line with the Basic Fee Amount as stated by The OfS<sup>1</sup>. They are based on the 22/23 fee limits as advised by the OfS. At the time of writing, fee caps for 23/24 have not been published. Should there be a significant upward difference between the 22/23 fee limits, SMB Group are committed to remaining stable with their fee structure as possible. Any mid-year fee changes will be communicated to applicants, and this document will be updated.

### 3.3 The definitions of full time and part time are specified as follows:

**3.3.1** “Full Time” is based on completing 120 credits per academic year

**3.3.2** “Part Time” is based on completing less than 120 credits in one academic year, but more than 60 credits and therefore approximated as completing on average 90 credits per academic year.

**3.3.3** Each course will be calculated based on the number of credits per academic year and the fee per credit, as set out in the below table.

### 3.4 Table 2: HE Fees for the Academic Year 2023/2024 for home students. SMB Group currently do not accept students that require a Student Visa to study within the UK.

Funding status	Fee to be paid
Higher level courses encapsulated within the SFA adult funding rules.	See the College's main fees policy
All courses £68.75 per credit, equating to:	Full time: £8,250 (120 credits in 1 academic year) Part time (up to): £6,187.50 (up to 90 credits in 1 academic year)

3.5 The above fees will apply unless the demand for the course or competitive market forces allow for discounts.

3.6 SMB Group reserve the right to increase tuition fees by inflation and/or the maximum permitted by law or Government policy in the second and subsequent years of a course. This will be communicated to students by the end June of the academic year before the one in which we intend to exercise that right.

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<sup>1</sup> [Fee limits - Office for Students](#)

- 4.0 **Home students** are defined as those living within the UK or Republic of Ireland and EU nationals with settled status. To meet the criteria of a 'home student', a student must:
- 4.1.1 Be settled in the UK (no immigrating restriction on the length of their stay)
  - 4.1.2 Ordinarily be a resident in the UK and have been for the full three years before the first day of the academic year.
  - 4.1.3 The main reason for the student being in the UK was NOT to receive full time education
- 4.2 **International students** are those students who do not fall under the definition as stated in 4.0 and are from outside of the United Kingdom. Further definition can be found at UKCISA (UK Council for International Student Affairs)<sup>2</sup>. SMB Group are not accepting International students, i.e. those that require a Student Visa, on to higher education programmes for 2023/24.
- 5.0 Included within tuition fees**
- 5.1 Tuition fees stated cover: all teaching provided for the course, all mandatory study trips (if present with the course), access to core textbooks through the SMB Group library (or partner institution if applicable) and some specialist equipment relevant to the course (if applicable).
- 5.2 If there are mandatory elements to the course that are not covered in the tuition fee, this will be advertised on the course website with an approximate cost associated.
- 5.3 The tuition fees do not include any additional extras such as; optional study trips or visits, additional kit or equipment, or travel expenses for work placements. These details will be published on the course pages of the website.
- 6.0 Payment of tuition fees**
- 6.1 All fees are required to be paid in full before the start of the course, unless alternative arrangements have been approved (see below).
- 6.2 Fees shown in the prospectus or online on the SMB Group website will reflect the current year only. Courses running over two or more years may attract new fees at the beginning of each year (see section 3.6).
- 6.3 A tuition fee loan to cover the full cost of tuition fees may be available from the Student Loans Company (SLC), subject to certain criteria.
- 6.4 To assist with the payment of fees the College offers instalment facilities, payable by Direct Debit for courses, under the following conditions:
- 6.4.1 Course length is at least 30 weeks
  - 6.4.2 Fees are at least £150
  - 6.4.3 The fees will be payable in the following way
    - 6.4.3.1 20% of the course fees is payable on enrolment
    - 6.4.3.2 Balance payable in monthly equal instalments on the 5th day of the month over the number of months of the course less two

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<sup>2</sup> [UKCISA - international student advice and guidance - Home or Overseas fees: the basics](#)

6.4.3.3 For Example: a course with a charge of £3,000 starts in September and finishes in June. This equates to 10 months. 20% of £3,000, £600 would be due at enrolment, followed by 8 equal instalments starting in October of £300 each. The full amount would then be paid by 5th May.

6.4.4 SMB Group reserve the right to offer alternative payment methods where a strong case exists to support an exceptional student circumstance. Where this is applied, it will first be approved by the Vice Principal.

6.4.5 Note different arrangements may exist when paying directly to one of SMB Group approved University partners.

6.4.6 Students wishing to take a break from their studies must be aware that this may impact on their course fees. Any breaks in study must be first authorised by the college with an agreement in place for payment of outstanding fees. Breaks in study without prior agreement may result in full liability for fees based on the original timetable of study.

## 7.0 Student Loans

7.1 Students are able to obtain loans, grants, scholarships, bursaries or sponsorship to pay for their HE course at SMB Group.

7.2 The Student Loans Company (SLC) and Student Finance England (SFE) administer financial support to eligible students pursuing higher and further education in accordance with the student support regulations and relevant public policy objectives.

7.3 Specific grants students may be eligible for:

**7.3.1 Tuition Fee Loan (SLC):** covers the tuition fee charged by the college. They will be repaid and are subject to interest, with the amount to be repaid each month based on current income.

**7.3.2 Maintenance Loan (SLC):** Assistance towards living costs such as rent and bills. They will be repaid and are subject to interest, with the amount to be repaid each month based on current income.

**7.3.3 Disabled Student's Allowances (DSAs) (SLC):** grants to assist with payment for additional costs that might be as a result of a disability, including; long term health conditions, mental health condition or specific learning difficulty such as dyslexia. DSAs are in addition to any to other student finance, do not have to be repaid and are not household income reliant. DSAs can cover payment for specialist equipment, non-medical helpers, travel costs and any other disability related costs of studying. Any students wishing to have further information or support should email [ALS@smbgroup.ac.uk](mailto:ALS@smbgroup.ac.uk).

**7.3.4 Dependents' Grants (SLC):** grants to assist those who are studying full time and have children or an adult who are financially dependent upon them. These are paid on top of other student finance and do not usually have to be paid back unless the course is left early. The amount usually depends on the household income of the student and can include Parent's Learning Allowance, Childcare Grant or Adult Dependents' Grant.

**7.3.5 Advanced Learner Loans (SFE):** available for students for level 3, 4, 5 of 6 qualifications. The course must qualify for advanced learner loan funding. The loan will need to be repaid after the courses is completed, or the student withdraws, and is based on a threshold income for repayments.

- 7.4 Where a student is being financially supported by a sponsor, the sponsor will be expected to comply with the payment of fees as set out in section 5.0.
- 7.5 SMB Group may choose to offer bursaries or fee waivers for students throughout the academic year. The details of the bursaries or fee waivers will be published on an annual basis, with details of how to apply and any associated terms and conditions.

## **8.0 Academic Scholarships**

- 8.1 Academic Scholarships are offered at SMB Group to encourage students who display talent and ability within their subject area to apply for a place at an undergraduate level, who would not have normally been able to consider studying due to personal or family financial constraints.
- 8.2 Five (5) SMB Academic Scholarships will be made available for applicants for the published academic year for any higher-level course that requires payment of a tuition fee.
- 8.3 In the September of each year, SMB will publish the percentage of the tuition fee that SMB will offer as a scholarship for the total time of the course enrolment which will be between 20% and 50% of the tuition fees.
- 8.3.1 E.g. in 2022-23 if a student is awarded a Scholarship with a 40% fee reduction, this will be applied to all years of study that the student is enrolled for.
- 8.3.2 The student must take up their place in the September in which the Scholarship is awarded for. Delaying/deferring the place may result in Scholarship being removed.
- 8.4 Any student applying for a foundation degree or higher national certificate or Top Up, that is not otherwise funded by an apprenticeship or employer can apply for an SMB Academic Scholarship.
- 8.5 Eligibility criteria will be published in October of each year prior to the year of enrolment, along with application process and deadlines for applications on SMB Group's website.

## **9.0 Additional bursaries and hardship funds**

- 9.1 One enrolled, students may be eligible for additional bursary or hardship funds. Each bursary or hardship is subject its own individual terms and conditions which will be communicated to students at the time of publication and as part of the application process.
- 9.2 Usually, any money distributed due to bursary or hardship will not be expected to be repaid by the student. Where this is not the case, it will be made clear to the student.

## **10.0 Related Policies**

- 10.1 In addition to this Policy, the following documents are related and can be found on SMB Group website:
- 10.1.1 Student Protection Plan**

## 10.1.2 Enrolment Terms and Conditions

## 10.1.3 HE Prospectus

### 11.0 Glossary of terms

APP	Access and participation Plan
AY	Academic Year
BA (Hons)	Bachelor of Arts (with honours)
BEng	Bachelor of Engineering
FdA	Foundation Degree (Arts)
BSc (Hons)	Bachelor of Science (with honours)
FdSc	Foundation Degree (Science)
FT	Full Time
HE	Higher Education
HEI	Higher Education Institution
HERA	Higher Education and Research Act (2017)
HNC	Higher National Certificate
HND	Higher National Diploma
OfS	Office for Students
PT	Part Time
SLC	Student Loans Company
SFE	Student Finance England
STEM	Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths
TEF	Teaching Excellence Framework