



SOUTH ESSEX
COLLEGES GROUP

Fees Policy 2024/25

Policy Owner	Zohayb Mohammed, CFO
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Related Policies	
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SIGNIFICANT CHANGES FOLLOWING REVIEW

Policy Review on 28 June 2024

Page Number or Heading Name	Details of significant change	Changes made by
Throughout Policy	Date changes to refer to 24/25 policies	Carrie Brown
Page 9&10	Update to the flowcharts in line with changes in Government contribution rates	Graham Williams
Throughout Policy	All references to 'The College' amended to 'The Group'	Carrie Brown

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This policy is approved by the Board of Governors of South Essex College and sets out the way in which tuition and other fees payable are set.
- 1.2 In setting the fees policy for 2024/25 the Group recognise that there is a balance to be found between maximising the income from fees and the potential barrier to learning that this approach might create.

2. OBJECTIVES

- 2.1 This policy is intended to:
 - 2.1.1 Set out the Group's approach to the fees charged for the education and training that it offers.
 - 2.1.2 Ensure the Group complies with guidance issued by the Education & Skills Funding Agency (ESFA) and Office for Students (OfS).
 - 2.1.3 Set out the ways in which the Group can assist in circumstances where the fees charged may pose a barrier to entry for learners.

3. GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- 3.1 Learners or their sponsor, unless they qualify for exemptions, will be charged:
 - 3.1.1 A tuition fee
 - 3.1.2 Any awarding organisation fees. This would typically be in the form of exam fees or registration fees although other fees may be applicable in certain circumstances.
 - 3.1.3 The cost of equipment and/or materials that will be required for the completion of the course. Any equipment purchased is the learner's property and will remain so on completion of the course.
 - 3.1.4 The cost of any education visits or trips they attend that may make up part of the course.
- 3.2 Fees are generally payable annually. For example, a fee will be payable for each year of a two-year course. Fees may be subject to annual increases and any fees quoted relate to the current year only unless explicitly stated otherwise.
- 3.3 Fees are payable at enrolment. If Fees are being paid by instalment, a sponsor or advanced learning loan the relevant declarations must be in place prior to the commencement of the course.
- 3.4 A learner's eligibility for funding, or any funding remission, is assessed at initial enrolment onto a course. The assessed eligibility remains for the duration of the course.

4. FUNDED COURSES (EXCLUDING APPRENTICESHIPS) – LEARNERS AGED 16-18 AND AGED 19-24 WITH AN EDUCATION HEALTH CARE PLAN (EHCP).

- 4.1 Learners on funded courses who are aged 16-18 will be funded by the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA).
- 4.2 Learners who are aged 19-24 and who have an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) are also funded by the ESFA on the same basis as 16-18 year olds. Throughout this policy where 16-18 year olds are referred this includes this group of learners.
- 4.3 Learners are usually required to have resided in the United Kingdom or European Union for the previous 3 years to be eligible for ESFA funding. There are exceptions to this rule which are set out in the ESFA Funding Regulations. The Group will assess a learner's eligibility prior to their enrolment on a course and any payment of fees.
- 4.4 For the purposes of eligibility to ESFA funding a learner's age is calculated on the 31st August of the academic year they begin their course. This means a learner aged 18 who starts on a two year course will retain their status as a 16-18 year old for the duration of their course. This does not apply to learners who turn 19 and progress to a level 3 extended diploma after completing another full level 3, e.g. a subsidiary diploma or a 90 credit diploma.
- 4.5 Learners who are aged 16-18 and are eligible for ESFA funding will not pay tuition fees for their course.
- 4.6 These learners will not be charged any awarding organisation registration or examination fees other than those set out in 4.8 and 4.9.
- 4.7 These learners will not be charged fees for any Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check relating to their course requirements.
- 4.8 In the event a learner does not meet the 90% minimum attendance requirement the Group reserves the right to request a voluntary contribution from the learner towards any awarding organisation fees that have been incurred for the initial sitting and any subsequent resits.
- 4.9 Where a learner fails to attend a notified examination and cannot produce either a medical certificate or evidence of significant extenuating circumstances which would justify the non-attendance the Group reserves the right to charge for any resit.
- 4.10 Some courses offered by the Group may offer equipment, material or uniform for students to purchase for use and retain within and outside of the Group. In order to ensure the viability of these courses, where appropriate these costs will be recovered from the learner.
- 4.11 Any courses which have additional fees for equipment, materials or uniform will be made clear to all learners prior to enrolment. In the event that learners are unable to afford these purchases financial support may be available from the 4 Bursary fund. Enquires related to financial support should be directed to the Learner Support team.
- 4.12 The costs of educational visits and trips will be recovered from the learners who choose to attend.

5. FUNDED COURSES (EXCLUDING APPRENTICESHIPS) – LEARNERS AGES 19+

- 5.1 Learners aged 19+ on a funded course may be eligible for remission of their tuition and examination fees if they meet certain criteria as set out by the (ESFA).
- 5.2 Learners are usually required to have resided in the United Kingdom or European Economic Area (EEA) for the previous 3 years to be eligible for ESFA funding. There are exceptions to this rule which are set out in the ESFA common funding rules 2020/21. The Group will assess a learner's eligibility prior to their enrolment on a course and any payment of fees.
- 5.3 Learners who are eligible for funding but are not entitled to remission of their fees will be co-funded by the organisation and a tuition fee will be charged. The tuition fee for part time courses will usually be 50% of the current un-weighted base funding rate as set by the ESFA.
- 5.4 Learners eligible for co-funding who are studying a full-time course will be charged an annual tuition fee.
- 5.5 Learners who provide satisfactory evidence of eligibility and are eligible for full remission of their fees will be fully-funded by the ESFA and no tuition fees will be charged.
- 5.6 A learner's full or co-funding status is assessed at the start of their course and remains the same for the duration of the course regardless of any change in circumstance.
- 5.7 The ESFA sets out the provision it will fully fund in its Adult Education Budget funding rules 2024/25. The table below shows where fee remission is available for learners.
- 5.8 The Adult Education Budget funding rules 2024/25 give further definitions on the categories used in the table above.
- 5.9 The ESFA no longer funds level 3 or above qualifications for learners aged 24 or over or for learners aged 19 or over if they already hold a level 3 or above qualification. For these learners there is now the possibility of accessing an Advanced Learning Loan. This is described in section 7 of this policy.
- 5.10 Some courses offered by the Group may offer equipment, material or uniform to purchase for use within and outside of the Group. In order to ensure the viability of these courses, where appropriate these costs will be recovered from the learner.
- 5.11 Any courses which have additional fees for equipment, material, uniform fees or DBS checks will be made clear to all learners prior to enrolment. In the event that learners are unable to afford these purchases financial support may be available from the Learner Support fund. Enquires related to financial support should be directed to the Learner Support team.
- 5.12 The costs of educational visits and trips will be recovered from the learners who choose to attend.

6. APPRENTICESHIPS

- 6.1 Prior to the commencement of an apprenticeship programme the Group will enter into a contract with the apprentice's employer.
- 6.2 This contract will detail any fees and associated payment schedules that have been agreed between both parties.
- 6.3 Whilst indicative fees may be set for the apprenticeship frameworks and standards that the Group offers, fees will be tailored for each agreement to take account of the possible variations in delivery requirements.
- 6.4 A separate policy is in place with sub-contractors.

7. ADVANCED LEVEL COURSES – LEARNERS AGED 19+

- 7.1 Any advanced level courses (level 3 or higher) for learners aged 24+ are not funded directly by the funding agencies. This is also the case for learners aged 19-23 who already hold an advanced level qualification.
- 7.2 For eligible advanced level courses learners have the opportunity to apply for an Advanced Learning Loan. More information can be found on the National Careers Service website.
- 7.3 If a learner chooses to pay their fees through an Advanced Learning Loan and then withdraws early from the course the Loan payments to the Group will cease. The learner will remain liable to the Learner Loan Company for the loan amount paid to date. The Group reserves the right to recover the balance of fees due.
- 7.4 If paying through an Advanced Learning Loan proof of a loan application must be supplied to the Group prior to the commencement of the course. Where the learner have not been provided with the letter for the loan the learner will be given six weeks to secure the loan. The Group reserves the right to withdraw the offer of a place on the course.
- 7.5 Some courses offered by the Group may offer equipment, material or uniform to students for purchase for use within and outside of the college. In order to ensure the viability of these courses, where appropriate these costs will be recovered from the learner.
- 7.6 Any courses which have additional equipment, material or uniform fees will make these fees clear to all learners prior to enrolment. In the event that learners are unable to afford these purchases financial support may be available from the Advanced Loan Bursary fund. Enquires related to financial support should be directed to the Student Services, Engagement and funding.
- 7.7 The costs of educational visits and trips will be recovered from the learners who choose to attend.

8. FULL COST COMMERCIAL COURSES

- 8.1 Full cost courses are run by the Group with no support from government funding agencies. The fees set for these courses are not subject to the same opportunity for remission as funded courses.
- 8.2 Fees must be paid prior to the commencement of the course unless alternative formal arrangements have been agreed with the Group. Examples of this may be a bespoke commercial course for an employer where it has been agreed to pay on receipt of an invoice.

9. INTERNATIONAL LEARNERS

- 9.1 For fee purposes we classify learners as Home or International. This classification is predominantly based on residency and follows the funding agencies' regulations on eligible learners. You will usually be classified as an international learner if you reside in any country outside of the EU/EEA, unless you have been granted permission by the UK government to live in the UK, which is not for educational purposes, and have been ordinarily resident in the UK for at least the previous three years before the start of learning. The full definition is set out in the ESFA funding regulation.
- 9.2 The Home or International status of a learner will be assessed during the application and enrolment process. This assessment will include a confirmation of visa status if appropriate and all cases will be judged in accordance with government guidelines, a summary of these regulations is available from the UK Council for International Learner Affairs (UKCISA).
- 9.3 International fees will be assessed on an individual basis depending on the type and level of the course.

10. FINANCIAL SUPPORT

- 10.1 The Group offers a range of bursaries and other financial support to its learners. Details of the support available and the eligibility requirements are available from the Student Services team.

11. INSTALMENTS

- 11.1 The Group outsources its instalment payments to FlexPay. Courses less than 12 weeks duration are not eligible to be paid by instalments and must be paid in full prior to the commencement of the course. Learners wishing to pay via instalments should complete the relevant documents during the enrolment process. 11.2.
- 11.2 Learners will be able to make monthly payments over the duration of their course. FlexPay will charge an administration fee of £6 per month. This fee is payable in full in advance. Further information can be found at <http://flexpay.uk.com/flexed/>. Learners who wish to pay in instalments must pay at enrolment the first 10% of the full cost of the course; this amount is non-refundable.

For example, if the learner spreads the remaining cost of a course over 6 months the administration fee payable to FlexPay is £36, payable in advance with the first monthly instalment, after which five further payments will need to be made to FlexPay.

If a learner fails to make a payment to FlexPay the debt will be recovered via their debt collection department, Oriel, on behalf of South Essex Colleges Group. 11.3.

- 11.3 A learner who withdraws after the start of their course will be given 2 weeks cooling off period and then will be liable for any remaining balance in full.

12. EMPLOYER PAYMENTS

12.1 Where a learner is sponsored by an Employer for their course and the employer requires an invoice, written acceptance of responsibility is required. This can be:

- a) an email to AccountsReceivable@southessex.ac.uk stating the name of the learner(s) being sponsored and the period of the sponsorship
- b) a purchase order submitted at enrolment
- c) a letter from the employer submitted at enrolment

12.2 In the event that a learner's fees are to be paid by an employer, once any of the above acceptance of responsibility has been received the employer remains ultimately liable for the course fees.

12.3 For courses of under 12 weeks in duration invoices after the start date of the course will not be available and all fees must be paid in full prior to the of the course.

13. NON-PAYMENT OF FEES

13.1 A learner's continued place on a course is dependent upon the payment of fees.

13.2 Any learners with outstanding fees due to the Group will not be allowed to enrol onto any further courses until the debt/outstanding fees have been paid in full.

13.3 Unpaid fees will be referred to a debt collection agency (Oriel) for recovery.

14. PAYMENT INCENTIVES

14.1 A 10% discount of the tuition fee will be given for courses of 24 weeks or more (excluding Apprenticeships and Higher Education courses) where the full year's fees are paid during enrolment, in advance of the start date.

15. REFUNDS

15.1 In the event that the Group closes a course or class a full refund will be made.

15.2 Refunds will usually be made by BACS.

15.3 Under normal circumstances, no refund shall be paid if a learner withdraws from a course for personal reasons after the commencement date of the course. All outstanding fees become due immediately upon withdrawal. In exceptional circumstances a partial refund may be granted at the discretion of the Senior Leadership Team.

15.4 College membership fees, equipment, material or uniform fees are non-refundable.

15.5 Refunds are subject to an administration charge. The amount for 2024/25 is 10% of the course fee

15.6 In addition refunds are subject to a deduction for any non-refundable third party sub-contract costs.

16. RETAKES AND REMARKING

16.1 The Group reserves the right to charge learners for retakes at its discretion.

16.2 The Group will only in extraordinary circumstances fund more than one retake unless the condition of funding dictates otherwise.

16.3 The Group reserves the right to charge when a learner or parent requests the remark of an external examination.

17. TRANSFERS

17.1 The following rules will be applied in the event of a learner transferring between courses at the Group:

17.1.1 If a learner transfers from a course to a course with similar fees no additional fees will be charged.

17.1.2 If a learner transfers to a course with a higher fee the learner will pay the difference between the new and old course.

17.1.3 Where a learner decides to transfer to a course with a lower fee a partial refund will be paid.

18. HOW FEES ARE SET

18.1 For funded courses, tuition fees will be set in line with the expectation of the funding agency (ESFA) of a 50% contribution from the learner / sponsor. Managers of curriculum areas may adjust these fees, with approval from the Deputy CEO Curriculum & Quality , to take account of local market information.

18.2 For learners who are funding their learning through the advanced Learning Loans the fees will be usually set at 100% of the ESFA's published maximum loan value. Managers of curriculum areas may adjust these fees with the approval of the Deputy CEO Curriculum, to take account of local market information.

18.3 For non-funded provision that is offered as full cost commercial courses the fee will be set at a level which reflects the content of the course taking into account local market conditions and the financial viability of the course.

18.4 For Higher Education courses fees will be set in line with the Access Agreement 2024/25. Continuing learners will be subject to the South Essex Colleges Group fee arrangements for their year of entry.

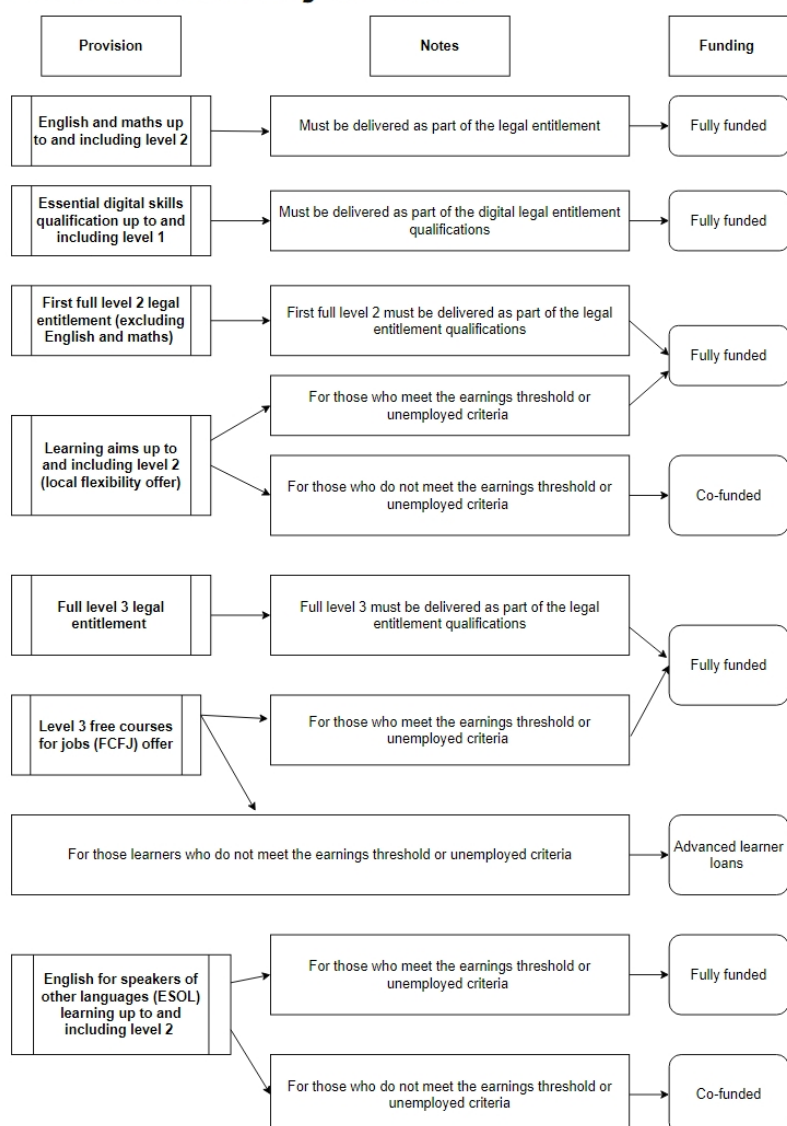
18.5 International Fees

18.5.1 In Country delivery fees are set by negotiation with the Group or provider.

18.5.2 Fees for International Students studying in the UK are based upon the costs of delivery plus a negotiation with the home provider and broker where relevant.

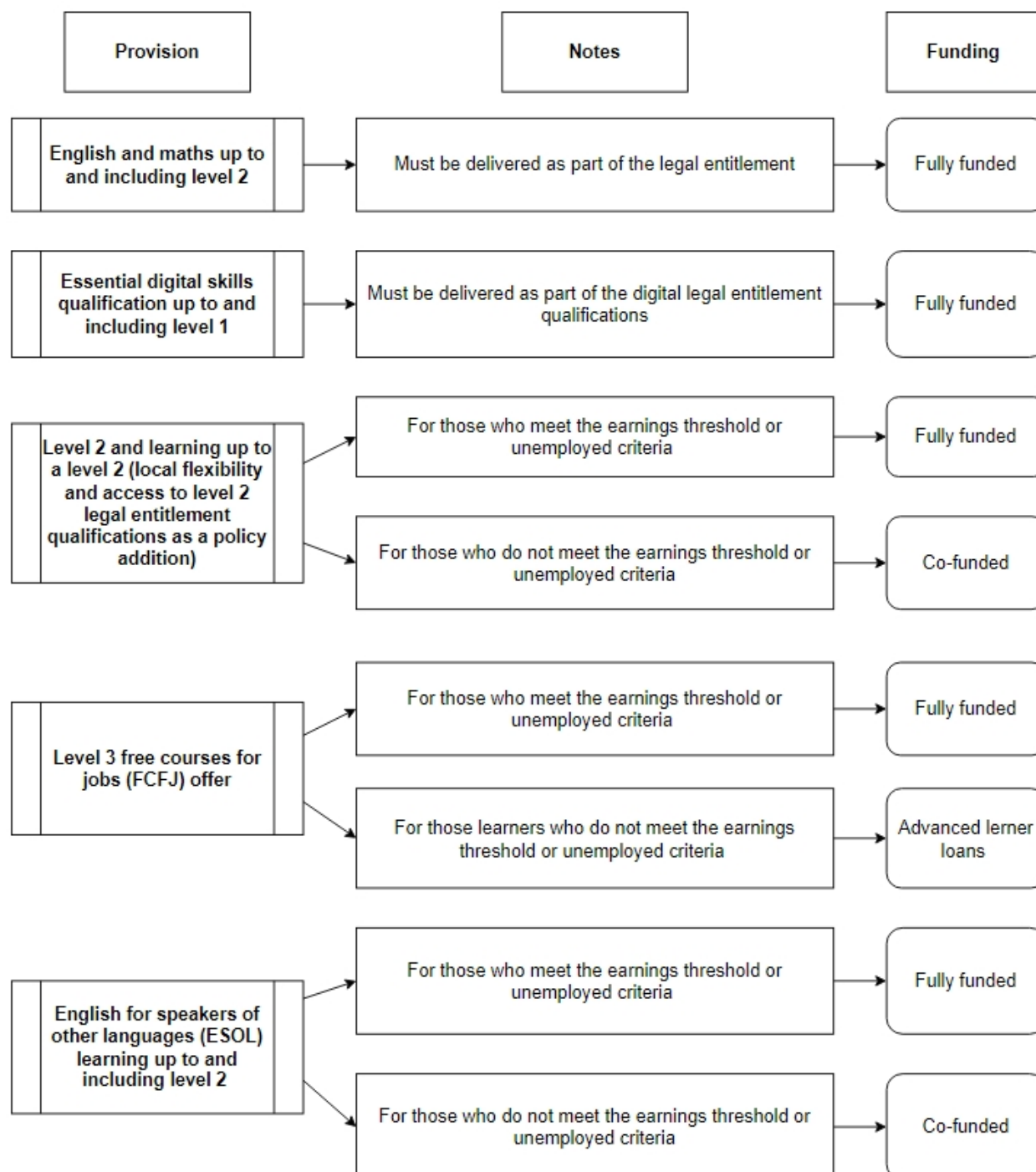
GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTION TABLE 19-23 YEARS OLD

Chart 1: 19 to 23-year-olds



GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTION TABLE 24+ YEARS OLD

Chart 2: 24+



GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTION TABLE 19-23 YEARS OLD

English and maths for those aged 19 and over, up to and including level 2	Fully funded	Must be delivered as part of the legal entitlement qualifications
Essential Digital Skills Qualifications up to and including level 1	Fully funded	Must be delivered as part of the digital legal entitlement qualifications list
First full level 2 (excluding English and maths and Digital)	Fully funded	First full level 2 must be delivered as part of the legal entitlement qualifications. Level 2 provision from the local flexibility offer will not be funded for 19 to 23 year olds who do not have a first full Level 2 refer to the 'local flexibility and legal entitlements' section
Learning aims to progress to a full level 2- up to and including level 1	Fully funded	Must be delivered as entry or level 1 provision from local flexibility
Level 3 legal entitlement (learners first full level 3)	Fully funded	First full level 3 must be delivered as part of the legal entitlement qualifications
Level 3 free courses for jobs offer	Fully funded	Learners without a full level 3 or above can access a qualification on the level 3 adult offer qualification list. Learners who already hold a level 3 or higher and meet the definition of unemployed or who are in receipt of low wage
Level 3 Advanced Learner Loan	Loan funded	A learner has already achieved a full level 3 Advanced learner loans funding rules
Traineeship (16 to 24-year olds) (section 3)	Fully funded	16- to 18-year-old learners must be eligible under the ESFA's young people's residency requirements. Excludes flexible element where funding depends on age and level. Note this offer goes up to 24 years olds
English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) learning up to and including level 2	Fully funded	For those eligible through unemployed or who are in receipt of a low wage
English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) learning up to and including level 2	Co-funded	For those who do not meet the definition of unemployed or do not meet the eligibility criteria for learners in receipt of low wage
Learning aims up to and including level 2, where the learner has already achieved a first full level 2, or above	Fully funded	For those eligible through unemployed or who are in receipt of a low wage
Learning aims up to and including level 2, where the learner has already achieved a first full level 2, or above	Co-funded	For those who do not meet the definition of unemployed or not meet the eligibility criteria for learners

GOVERNMENT CONTRIBUTION TABLE 24+ YEARS OLD

English and maths for those aged 19 and over, up to and including level 2	Fully funded	Must be delivered as part of the legal entitlement qualifications list
Essential Digital Skills Qualifications up to and including level 1	Fully funded	Must be delivered as part of the digital legal entitlement qualifications list
Full level 2 (excluding English and maths)	Fully funded	For those eligible through unemployed or in receipt of a low wage
Full level 2 (excluding English and maths)	Co-funded	For those who do not meet the definition of unemployed or do not meet the eligibility criteria for learners in receipt of a low wage
Learning to progress to level 2 (Local flexibility and legal entitlements)	Fully funded	For these eligible for their first full level 2 through unemployed or in receipt of a low wage
Learning to progress to level 2	Co-funded	For those who do not meet the definition of unemployed or do not meet the eligibility criteria for learners in receipt of a low wage
Level 3 free courses for jobs offer	Fully funded	Learners without a full level 3 or above accessing a qualification on the level 3 adult offer qualifications list. Learners who already hold a level 3 or higher and meet the definition of unemployed or in receipt of a low wage

Level 3 free courses for jobs offer	Loan funded	All 24+ learners who are not eligible for the level 3 adult offer must refer to the advanced learner loans funding rules
English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) learning up to and including level 2	Fully funded	For those eligible through unemployed or in receipt of a low wage
English for speakers of other languages (ESOL) learning up to and including level 2	Co-funded	For those who do not meet the definition of unemployed or do not meet the eligibility criteria for learners in receipt of a low wage
Learning aims up to and including level 2, where the learner has already achieved a first full level 2, or above (local flexibility and legal entitlements)	Fully funded	For those eligible through unemployed or in receipt of a low wage
Learning aims up to and including level 2, where the learner has already achieved a first full level 2, or above (local flexibility and legal entitlements)	Co-funded	For those who do not meet the definition of unemployed or do not meet the eligibility criteria for learners in receipt of a low wage