



The North Highland College, University of the Highlands and Islands

Further Education Fee Waiver Policy

POL

Lead Officer (Post):	Director Corporate Services and Finance
Responsible Office/ Department:	Finance Office
Responsible Committee:	Board of Management
Review Officer (Post):	Finance Manager
Date policy approved:	October 2018
Date policy last reviewed and updated:	21/07/2020
Date policy due for review:	May 2020
Date of Equality Impact Assessment:	May 2018
Date of Privacy Impact Assessment:	n/a

This policy covers the 2020-21 academic year.

For all our up-to-date policies, please visit our [website](#).

Accessible versions of this policy are available upon request.

Policy Summary

Overview	This policy is required to set out a regional approach to Further Education Fee Waivers for The North Highland College and all academic partners in the University of the Highlands and Islands.
Purpose	The policy will provide a framework for a consistent and coherent methodology for the awarding of Scottish Funding Council and discretionary fee waivers for further education courses.
Scope	This policy applies to all academic partners who run further education courses.
Consultation	This policy was developed by a Policy Ownership Group, made up of practitioners from across the University of the Highlands and Islands network. Endorsement was received from the Finance Directors Practitioner Group and Partnership Council, before the policy went through local consultation and approval by College Boards of Management.
Implementation and Monitoring	Academic partners will be responsible for implementing and monitoring the policy. Analysis will be carried out of the policy's impact by staff from the Vice-Principal for Further Education's office.
Risk Implications	The policy reduces risk for the University and academic partners by creating a streamlined process and a community of practice for staff. Students will also benefit from a consistent approach across all partners.
Link with Strategy	
Impact Assessment	Equality Impact Assessment: Assessed – No further action to be taken.
	Privacy Impact Assessment: n/a

1. Policy Statement

1.1 This document sets out the policy for the awarding of Further Education fee waivers in The North Highland College, University of the Highlands and Islands. This policy refers to Scottish Funding Council policy and guidelines on fee waivers, which is reviewed annually. A position is also set out for the awarding of discretionary fee waivers from a College's individual budget.

2. Definitions

2.1 Scottish Funding Council ("SFC") - SFC is the national, strategic body that is responsible for funding teaching and learning provision, research and other activities in Scotland's colleges and universities. SFC gives funding to colleges and universities with guidance on how the funds should be distributed to students.

3. Purpose

3.1 This policy sets out a robust and transparent framework for the awarding Further Education course fee waivers at the College.

3.2 The policy will create an equality of experience for students across the partnership, whilst allowing individual colleges the flexibility to respond to local needs.

3.3 SFC Funded Fee Waivers

The core of this policy is based on the SFC Guidance on Fee Waiver Grant Policy and any associated annexes and appendices. The current SFC Guidance can be accessed [here](#). The majority of fee waivers will be funded by SFC.

3.4 Discretionary Fee Waivers

Students attending the University of the Highlands and Islands will have a parity of experience through the use of SFC Fee Waivers. Under exceptional circumstances and subject to individual budgets, colleges have the power to award discretionary fee waivers.

3.4.1 Categories of Discretionary Fee Waivers include but are not limited to:

- Staff development, where a course is an essential part of an approved staff development plan
- Additional academic requirements, where the College stipulates compulsory completion of an additional qualification as part of the main course
- Exceptional requirements, where College Senior Management identify a significant local benefit to use of Discretionary Fee Waivers

3.4.2 Colleges should endeavour to create parity of experiences for students across the region through their use of discretionary fee waivers.

3.4.3 Due consideration should be given to the impact of discretionary fee waiver usage on other colleges in the University of the Highlands and Islands partnership.

4. Scope

4.1 This Policy applies to all applicants for further education courses (full-time and part-time), except for the courses set out in Section 5 below.

4.2 Applicants for higher education courses should refer to the [Higher Education Fees Policy](#). Higher education courses are normally Level 7 and above on the [SCQF Framework](#).

5. Exceptions

5.1 Courses outwith the scope of this policy are:

- All leisure courses
- All commercial courses
- SVQ courses

5.2 Please refer to the accompanying Fee Waiver Procedures for further information and an eligibility flowchart.

6. Notification

- 6.1 Staff engaging with Fee Waivers should be familiar with this policy and all relevant SFC policies.
- 6.2 Annual changes to SFC policies will be cascaded to staff by line managers and hyperlinks in the policy updated to reflect the most recent guidance.
- 6.3 Any changes in SFC policy or national legislation will be reflected in this policy.
- 6.4 The policy will be publicly available on the College's website, along with other current policies.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

- 7.1 The College's most senior Financial Officer has overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and the management of Fee Waivers, including the approval of Discretionary Fee Waivers.
- 7.2 Staff administering Fee Waivers are responsible for ensuring up-to-date SFC guidance is followed.
- 7.3 Awarding of Discretionary Fee Waivers will be recorded and reported on annually to the Finance Directors Practitioner Group.

8. Legislative Framework

[Further and Higher Education \(Scotland\) Act 2005](#)

[Equality Act 2010](#)

[Scottish Government: Costs of Learning Student Funding Guide](#)

9. Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines and Other Resources

- 9.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with SFC Fee Waiver policies and guidance. The up-to-date information can be accessed [here](#).
- 9.2 University of the Highlands and Islands Further Education Fee Waiver Procedures
- 9.3 University of the Highlands and Islands Further Education Student Funding Support Policy
- 9.4 College Access and Inclusion Strategy can be accessed [here](#).

Version	Date	Approved by	Amendment(s)	Author
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