Fees, Fee Remission and Refunds Policy

Item	Details
Policy owner	Anthony Bale
Position	Finance & Compliance Director
Version	Version 2
Applies to	Learners and Staff
Effective from	August 2026
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1. Purpose

Skills-UK Education & Training Ltd ("Skills-UK") is committed to ensuring that all fees, fee remission, contributions and refunds associated with its education and training provision are managed fairly, consistently and transparently.

The purpose of this policy is to set out how Skills-UK:

- determines whether a learner is eligible for fully funded or co-funded provision;
- identifies when a learner, employer or other third party is required to make a financial contribution;
- communicates fees and financial contributions before enrolment or commencement of learning;
- applies fee remission where permitted;
- manages payment and invoicing arrangements;
- considers and processes refunds;
- manages fees following withdrawal or cancellation; and
- maintains appropriate financial and funding records.

Skills-UK primarily delivers publicly funded adult education and training to learners aged 19 and over. Where an eligible learner is entitled to fully funded provision under the relevant funding and contractual rules, no tuition fee will be charged to the learner.

This policy supports compliance with the requirements of the Department for Education (DfE), relevant Mayoral Combined Authorities, local authorities and other funding or contracting bodies.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all education and training delivered by Skills-UK where a fee, financial contribution or potential refund may arise, including:

- Adult Skills Fund (ASF) provision;
- Skills Bootcamps;
- other publicly funded adult education and skills programmes;
- employer-funded or employer-contribution provision;
- co-funded provision; and

- commercial or full-cost provision.

The policy applies to learners, employers and other third parties responsible for payment, together with Skills-UK staff involved in learner recruitment, enrolment, eligibility assessment, funding compliance, finance, delivery and quality assurance.

Skills-UK's provision is primarily for adults aged 19 and over. This policy does not therefore set out fee arrangements relating specifically to 16–18 study programmes or other forms of provision that Skills-UK does not deliver.

Legacy Multiply or UK Shared Prosperity Fund arrangements apply only where an active or continuing contract authorises the relevant activity. Their inclusion in an earlier policy does not establish current funding availability.

3. Policy Principles

Skills-UK will apply the following principles:

- fees and contributions will be applied in accordance with the requirements of the relevant funding body, contract and programme;
- eligible learners will not be charged tuition fees for provision to which they are entitled to full public funding;
- eligibility for public funding and fee remission will be assessed before enrolment and/or commencement of learning;
- learners and employers will be informed of any applicable fees or contributions before they commit to the programme;
- Skills-UK will not impose charges that are prohibited by the relevant funding rules;
- fee arrangements will be applied fairly and consistently;
- no learner will be disadvantaged financially where Skills-UK cancels provision and is unable to provide a suitable alternative;
- statutory consumer rights will be honoured, with funding and contractual arrangements applied consistently with the law; and
- decisions relating to fees, contributions, remission and refunds will be appropriately recorded and auditable.

Skills-UK recognises that funding arrangements and eligibility criteria can change. Applicable law takes precedence. Current funding and contractual rules govern programme eligibility and claims, but cannot override statutory consumer rights.

4. Funding Eligibility and Assessment

Before enrolment onto publicly funded provision, Skills-UK will assess each learner's eligibility in accordance with the requirements of the relevant funding body and contract.

This may include consideration of:

- age;
- residency and immigration status;
- postcode and funding area;
- employment status;
- income or earnings;
- benefits or economic inactivity;
- prior attainment;
- existing qualifications;

- course level and learning aim;
- entitlement to statutory or national funding offers; and
- any additional eligibility requirements specified by the relevant funding body or contracting authority.

Learners may be required to provide appropriate evidence to demonstrate eligibility. Skills-UK will retain evidence and declarations in accordance with the applicable funding rules, contractual requirements and its record-retention arrangements.

Eligibility will not be assumed solely because a learner has previously received publicly funded education or training.

Where eligibility cannot be established, Skills-UK will not claim public funding for the learner until the required eligibility has been confirmed.

The Finance & Compliance Director must maintain a controlled reference for each active contract, identifying the funding body, funding year, learner postcode area, eligibility and evidence requirements, current thresholds, contribution rules, permitted discretion and source guidance. Staff must use the version applicable to the learner and cohort. National non-devolved ASF rules must not automatically be applied to devolved provision.

Unemployment, benefits, disability, low income or financial hardship do not automatically establish full funding for every programme. A diagnosis must not be treated as a universal fee-remission entitlement. Where evidence is unavailable, explain the options and explore permitted alternatives before reaching a decision. Do not claim funding until the required eligibility is established.

5. Fully Funded Provision

Where the applicable funding rules provide full funding for an eligible learner and learning aim, Skills-UK will not charge the learner a tuition fee.

Depending upon the programme and funding arrangements, full funding may be available because of factors including the learner's age, employment status, income, prior attainment, qualification being undertaken or other eligibility criteria.

The exact criteria will be determined by the current rules of the relevant funding body and contract rather than fixed within this policy, as funding requirements may vary between funding areas and funding years.

Skills-UK will make learners aware where their programme is fully funded.

A learner will not receive a cash payment or refund representing the value of public funding allocated to their programme.

6. Co-funded Provision

Some publicly funded programmes may require a financial contribution towards the cost of learning.

Where co-funding applies, Skills-UK will determine the appropriate contribution in accordance with the current funding rules and contractual requirements.

Before enrolment, the learner will be informed of:

- the amount they are required to pay;
- what the payment relates to;
- when payment is due;
- any agreed payment arrangements; and
- the applicable cancellation and refund arrangements.

Skills-UK will not waive a mandatory learner or employer contribution where doing so would breach funding or contractual requirements.

Where a learner's circumstances mean that they qualify for full funding or fee remission, subject to the relevant rules and appropriate evidence being provided, the applicable fee will not be charged.

7. Fee Remission

Fee remission means that a learner who would otherwise be required to contribute towards the cost of their learning is not required to pay some or all of that contribution because they meet specified eligibility criteria.

Fee remission will only be applied where:

- the learner meets the applicable eligibility requirements;
- the learning programme is eligible for public funding;
- remission is permitted by the relevant funding body or contract; and
- any required evidence or declaration has been obtained.

Learners may be required to provide evidence of their personal circumstances, including evidence of employment, income, benefits, residency or prior attainment.

Skills-UK will apply the current fee-remission requirements of the relevant funding body or contracting authority. Specific income thresholds and other eligibility limits are not stated within this policy because these can change between funding years and funding areas.

Where the required evidence is not available, Skills-UK will work with the learner to establish whether alternative acceptable evidence can be provided in accordance with the relevant funding rules.

Where a person cannot afford a lawful contribution, staff must discuss permitted support, alternative provision or payment arrangements. Discretionary remission must be authorised by the Finance & Compliance Director or an appropriately delegated decision-maker, funded from an appropriate source and recorded. An organisational subsidy must not be presented as public funding entitlement.

Mandatory contributions must not be covertly refunded, offset or recorded as paid when they have not been received. Record the eligibility category, evidence, decision, any discretion exercised, approving person and outcome communicated to the learner. Explain outstanding evidence, any fee due and the review route before the learner commits.

8. Employer Contributions

Certain programmes may require an employer to make a financial contribution towards the cost of training.

This may include Skills Bootcamps or other programmes where employer contributions are specified within the applicable funding or contractual arrangements.

Where an employer contribution is required:

- the contribution will be calculated in accordance with the applicable funding and contractual requirements;
- the employer will be informed of the amount and payment arrangements;
- the contribution will be confirmed through an appropriate employer agreement, booking arrangement or other written confirmation;
- Skills-UK will issue an invoice where applicable; and
- appropriate records of the contribution and payment will be maintained.

Skills-UK will not waive, reimburse or otherwise offset an employer contribution where doing so would breach funding or contractual requirements.

Where different contribution levels apply according to employer size or other eligibility criteria, the appropriate contribution will be established using the current programme rules.

9. Commercial and Full-Cost Provision

Where provision is not supported by public funding, Skills-UK may offer training on a commercial or full-cost basis.

Fees for commercial provision will be determined taking account of factors including:

- course duration;
- staffing and delivery costs;
- accreditation or awarding organisation costs;
- materials and resources;
- venue or equipment costs;
- group size;
- delivery location;
- administration; and
- prevailing market conditions.

Commercial fees will be agreed before delivery begins and communicated clearly to the learner, employer or organisation purchasing the training.

Commercial provision may be subject to additional terms and conditions agreed at the point of booking or contracting.

10. Additional Charges

Where permitted under the relevant funding arrangements, additional charges may apply for items or services that are not covered by public funding.

These could include, where applicable:

- replacement certificates;
- replacement learning materials or equipment;
- optional materials or resources;
- examination or assessment resits where permitted;
- professional registration or membership fees; or
- other optional services outside the funded learning programme.

Skills-UK will not charge learners for items that are required to be provided without charge under the applicable funding rules.

Any additional charge will be communicated to the learner before the cost is incurred wherever reasonably possible.

11. Payment and Invoicing

Where a learner, employer or third party is required to make a payment, Skills-UK will clearly communicate the amount due and the payment arrangements.

Payment may be collected through an invoice or another payment method approved by Skills-UK.

Invoices will specify the relevant payment terms.

Where appropriate and agreed in advance, Skills-UK may permit payment by instalments. Any such arrangement will be confirmed with the person or organisation responsible for payment.

All payments received will be recorded within Skills-UK's financial systems and appropriate financial records retained.

12. Non-payment of Fees or Contributions

Where a required fee or contribution remains unpaid, Skills-UK will make reasonable attempts to contact the learner, employer or other responsible party to resolve the outstanding amount.

Skills-UK may take proportionate action to recover legitimately outstanding debts in accordance with its financial procedures.

Where public funding is conditional upon receipt of a learner or employer contribution, non-payment will be managed in accordance with the relevant funding and contractual requirements.

Skills-UK will not record or claim a contribution as having been received where payment has not actually been made.

13. Learner Withdrawal

A learner wishing to withdraw should notify Skills-UK as soon as possible.

For fully funded provision, there will normally be no learner fee to refund. Skills-UK will update the learner's funding record in accordance with the relevant funding rules.

For co-funded, commercial or other fee-paying provision, withdrawal does not automatically create an entitlement to a refund.

Any refund will depend upon:

- when the learner withdraws;
- whether learning has commenced;
- the amount of provision already delivered;
- costs already incurred by Skills-UK;
- the reason for withdrawal;
- the applicable terms agreed at enrolment or booking; and
- any funding or contractual requirements.

Refunds following withdrawal will be considered under the refunds, exceptional circumstances and statutory consumer rights sections of this policy.

14. Refunds

A fee refund relates to money actually paid to Skills-UK. Other statutory remedies may also apply. The guidance below on discretionary refunds does not restrict cancellation rights, remedies for deficient services or any other legal entitlement.

Refunds may be considered where:

- Skills-UK cancels a programme and cannot provide a suitable alternative;
- Skills-UK is unable to deliver the provision agreed;
- a significant change made by Skills-UK materially affects the learner's ability to undertake the programme;
- payment has been made in error or an overpayment has occurred;
- the learner withdraws before the programme starts and Skills-UK has not incurred non-recoverable costs; or
- exceptional circumstances apply.

Subject to statutory rights, the agreed fair terms and individual circumstances, a discretionary refund will not normally be provided where:

- provision is fully funded and no financial payment has been made by the learner;
- the learner voluntarily withdraws after learning has commenced;
- a learner stops attending without formally withdrawing;
- non-attendance results from learner choice;
- Skills-UK has already incurred non-recoverable registration, accreditation, examination or other third-party costs;
- funded milestones or contracted services have already been delivered, unless a refund is contractually required; or
- issuing a refund would breach funding or contractual requirements.

Each request will be considered on its individual circumstances and in accordance with the relevant contractual and funding requirements.

15. Cancellation or Changes by Skills-UK

Skills-UK will make reasonable efforts to deliver programmes as advertised and agreed.

However, it may occasionally be necessary to cancel, postpone or make significant changes to a programme due to circumstances such as insufficient enrolments, staff availability, venue issues or other operational circumstances.

Where Skills-UK cancels fee-paying provision before it starts, the learner, employer or other payer will normally be offered:

- a transfer to an appropriate alternative programme or date; or
- a full refund of fees paid to Skills-UK for the cancelled provision.

Where a programme has already commenced and Skills-UK is unable to complete the agreed delivery, an appropriate remedy will be considered based on the circumstances. This may include alternative delivery arrangements, transfer or a full or proportionate refund.

Skills-UK will not seek to financially disadvantage a learner as a consequence of provider cancellation.

16. Exceptional Circumstances

Skills-UK recognises that exceptional circumstances may prevent a learner from commencing or completing their programme.

These may include, but are not limited to:

- serious illness or injury;
- bereavement;
- significant caring responsibilities;
- substantial and unforeseen changes in personal circumstances; or
- other circumstances outside the learner's reasonable control.

Where a fee has been paid, Skills-UK may consider a full or partial refund in exceptional circumstances.

Supporting evidence may be requested where reasonable and proportionate.

Exceptional refund decisions will be considered individually and require appropriate senior management approval.

17. Requesting a Refund

Refund requests should be made in writing and should include, where applicable:

- the learner's or employer's name;
- programme or course details;
- course start date;
- amount paid;
- reason for requesting the refund; and
- any relevant supporting information or evidence.

Skills-UK will review requests within a reasonable timeframe and communicate the outcome in writing.

Approved refunds will normally be returned using an appropriate payment method and to the original payer wherever practicable.

A record of the request, decision, approval and payment will be retained for audit purposes.

18. Statutory Consumer Rights and Cancellation

Where a learner purchases services as a consumer, the Consumer Rights Act 2015 and applicable consumer contract rules apply. Training must be provided with reasonable care and skill and in accordance with binding information. A remedy may include repeat performance or an appropriate price reduction, potentially a full refund, where the legal conditions are met. Public funding conditions do not remove these rights.

Where the Consumer Contracts Regulations provide a cancellation right for a distance or off-premises service contract, the consumer normally has 14 days after the day the contract is made to cancel without giving a reason. Skills-UK must supply the required pre-contract information, cancellation instructions and model cancellation form in a durable form. Failure to provide cancellation information can extend the period under the Regulations.

If delivery is to start within that period, obtain the consumer’s express request before starting, in a durable medium for an off-premises contract. Explain any lawful proportionate charge if they

cancel after requested delivery begins. The cancellation right is lost on full performance only where the required express request or consent and acknowledgement of that consequence have been obtained. Do not infer these from attendance alone.

A statutory cancellation refund must be made without undue delay and within the applicable 14-day deadline, normally by the original payment method unless otherwise expressly agreed and without an additional fee. Only deductions permitted by law may be made. Registration fees or third-party costs are not automatically non-refundable merely because Skills-UK has incurred them.

For cancellations outside statutory rights, apply the fair terms supplied before booking. Any retained cancellation charge must be justified and proportionate to actual net loss, taking account of savings and reasonable steps to reduce that loss. Do not use a blanket no-refund term. Business-to-business contracts may have different rights; staff must establish who is contracting and in what capacity.

The Finance & Compliance Director must check the applicable legal route before refusing a refund, deducting costs or offering an alternative in place of a legal entitlement. Staff must not make refund decisions conditional on giving up a statutory right.

19. Complaints and Appeals

Where a learner, employer or other payer is dissatisfied with a decision relating to fees or refunds, they may request that the decision is reviewed.

Where the matter remains unresolved, the individual or organisation may raise the matter through Skills-UK's Complaints and Appeals Procedure.

The existence of an outstanding complaint will not alter any statutory, contractual or funding obligations applying to Skills-UK.

A learner may request review of an eligibility or fee-remission decision as well as a refund decision. An appropriate manager not involved in the original decision should consider the relevant evidence and rules wherever practicable. Provide accessible assistance, explain the outcome and refer unresolved service complaints to the Complaints Policy. Assessment decisions follow the separate Assessment Appeals Policy and Procedure where relevant.

20. Roles and Responsibilities

Managing Director

Has overall organisational accountability for ensuring appropriate governance and implementation of this policy.

Finance & Compliance Director

Has responsibility for financial oversight, ensuring that fee and refund arrangements comply with funding and contractual requirements, and approving exceptional financial decisions where appropriate.

Finance Team

Responsible for:

- raising and recording invoices;

- recording payments;
- processing authorised refunds;
- maintaining accurate financial records; and
- supporting the management of outstanding payments.

Operations and Compliance Team

Responsible for:

- ensuring learner eligibility is appropriately assessed;
- ensuring required eligibility evidence is obtained and retained;
- applying the correct funding and fee status;
- ensuring funding requirements are followed; and
- maintaining an appropriate audit trail.

Delivery and Learner-Facing Staff

Responsible for ensuring that learners are directed to appropriate staff where questions concerning eligibility, fees or financial contributions arise and for avoiding commitments regarding fee remission or refunds unless authorised to do so.

Learners and Employers

Are responsible for providing accurate information and evidence relevant to funding eligibility and for paying any fees or contributions that have been properly agreed and are due.

21. Record Keeping and Audit

Skills-UK will maintain appropriate records relating to:

- funding eligibility assessments;
- evidence supporting fee remission;
- learner and employer contributions;
- invoices;
- payments;
- refund requests;
- refund decisions and approvals;
- refunds issued; and
- relevant communications.

Records will be retained in accordance with the requirements of the applicable funding body or contract and Skills-UK's information governance and record-retention arrangements.

Records may be made available to funding bodies, contracting authorities, auditors or other authorised organisations where required.

22. Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Skills-UK is committed to ensuring that its fees and refund arrangements are applied fairly and consistently and do not unlawfully discriminate against any learner.

Funding eligibility and fee-remission decisions will be based upon the requirements of the relevant funding body and contract and the evidence required to demonstrate eligibility.

Learners who require reasonable adjustments or support to understand or provide eligibility information will be supported in accordance with Skills-UK's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion arrangements.

23. Fraud, Misrepresentation and Incorrect Information

Learners and employers are expected to provide accurate and complete information when establishing eligibility for public funding or fee remission.

Where Skills-UK identifies that funding or fee remission has been obtained on the basis of materially incorrect, misleading or fraudulent information, the matter will be investigated and managed in accordance with applicable funding rules and Skills-UK procedures.

Where required, Skills-UK may correct funding records, notify the relevant funding or contracting body and seek recovery of amounts properly due.

24. Monitoring and Review

Implementation of this policy will be monitored through Skills-UK's finance, compliance and quality assurance arrangements.

The policy will normally be reviewed annually and may be reviewed earlier following:

- changes to national funding rules;
- changes to devolved or local funding requirements;
- new contractual requirements;
- changes to Skills-UK's provision;
- audit or compliance findings; or
- identified improvements to organisational practice.

Applicable legal requirements and the relevant funding rules must be checked when this policy is applied. Contractual or funding terms must not be used to remove statutory consumer rights.

The contract-specific eligibility and fees reference must be updated whenever applicable funding conditions change, rather than waiting for the annual policy review.

25. Superseded Policies

On approval and issue, this policy replaces and supersedes the separate Fees and Refunds Policy and Local Fee Remission Policy. Their subject matter is incorporated into this single policy.

The policy owner must withdraw the superseded operational versions, retain controlled archive copies, update the policy register and change references in linked documents to this combined title. Record the actual approval and effective dates. Until the combined document is approved and issued, this draft does not itself withdraw an approved policy.

26. Related Policies and Procedures

- Learner Support Policy;
- Complaints Policy;
- Assessment Appeals Policy and Procedure where an assessment decision is involved;
- Student Identification Policy;
- Enrolment Days Procedure;
- Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Policy;

- Data Protection and GDPR Policy;
- Privacy Notice; and
- Document Retention and Secure Storage Policy.