



**Name of Policy**

**REFUND AND COMPENSATION POLICY**

**Purposes**

To outline the College policy for refunds in the event of course cancellations and / or student withdrawals

**Author / Job Title**

Finance Manager

**Equality Assessment  
By Whom**

Finance Manager

**Date**

05/2018

**Version**

1

**Date of next review  
(month & year)**

05/2019

**Approved by**

|                | <b>Date</b> |
|----------------|-------------|
| Senior Manager | 30.8.18     |
| SMT            |             |
| Corporation    |             |

**Related policies or procedures  
or parent policy if applicable**

Tuition Fees Policy  
Higher Education Fee Payment Policy and Procedures

**Groups/bodies consulted in  
the development of the policy**

**To be published on College  
website**

Yes

# REFUND AND COMPENSATION POLICY

## Summary

The College shall refund all fees in full should a course be cancelled, or where the College is unable to preserve the continuation of study or if the attendance of the student is not possible as a result of action taken by the College.

The College shall refund all fees in full should a student enrol in advance and subsequently withdraw from a course prior to the course commencing, providing that the College is notified of this intention at least five working days prior to the start date of the course.

Once a course has commenced, refunds may be offered on request within the following notice periods, should a student determine that the course is unsuitable or should there be a change in circumstances since enrolment:-

- **Higher Education** - full or partial refund (refer to Section 4.2 for specific liabilities dependent upon time of withdrawal) in accordance with the Higher Education Fee Payment Policy.
- **Further Education** (Level 3 and above) – full refund within 14 days from course start date (refer to Section 4.2 for specific liabilities dependent upon time of withdrawal).
- **All other courses** – no refunds offered.

The College does however, retain the discretion to authorise a proportionate refund or credit note in the event that the student is able to demonstrate extenuating circumstances that has prevented them from continuing with their course.

The refund of fees may be considered in the following circumstances:

1. Course cancellation
2. Complaint
3. Student request prior to course start date
4. Exceptional circumstances

## **1. Course Cancellation**

### 1.1 Course Cancellation – Insufficient Student Numbers

The College reserves the right to cancel any course with prior notice should there be an insufficient number of students enrolled on the course, or for any other operational reason determined by the College.

In the event of a course cancellation, the College shall make every attempt where possible, to provide alternative arrangements for students already enrolled on the course. This may extend to the offer of alternate days, times or venue or acceptance to an alternate course provision.

The College may consider compensatory payments to cover reasonable additional travel expenses incurred as a result of the amended provision and / or location, where these can be clearly evidenced and documented. All claims should be submitted within 28 days of notification from the College through Student Services.

Should alternative arrangements not be suitable to the student, a full refund of tuition fees and where appropriate, registration fees will be automatically refunded to the affected students.

Invoices raised in respect of fees owed shall be credited, and any fees paid shall be reimbursed to the appropriate student, sponsor or employer within 14 days of receipt of the Request for Refund by the Finance Department.

### 1.2 Course Cancellation – Course Provision Discontinued

In the unlikely event of the College being unable to preserve the continuation of study, the College shall make every attempt where possible, to provide alternative arrangements for students already enrolled on the course. This may extend to the offer of alternate days, times or venue.

Should alternative arrangements not be suitable to the student, a full refund of tuition fees and where appropriate, registration fees will be automatically refunded to the affected students.

The College may also consider compensatory payments to cover reasonable additional travel or other expenses incurred as a result of the discontinued provision, where these can be clearly evidenced and documented. All claims should be submitted within 28 days of notification from the College through the Programme Leader.

All invoices raised in respect of fees owed shall be credited to the student account to eliminate the financial liability to the College. All fees paid to or received by the College in respect of the discontinued provision, shall be refunded by the Finance Department in accordance with the method of payment, within 14 days of the completed Request for Refund.

- **Tuition Fee Loan** – the College shall arrange for the Student Loans Company to claw back any payments made directly to the College.
- **Student** – where a student has made payment directly to the College themselves, a full refund will be made to the student within 14 days of the date that the approved Request for Refund is received within the Finance Department. The method of refund payment shall be consistent with the original method of fee payment in line with Section 5.
- **Sponsor / Employer** – where fees have been paid by an employer or sponsor in respect of a student, the refund shall be made directly to the employer / sponsor. A credit note shall be raised against the customer account and the method of refund payment shall be consistent with the original method of fee payment in line with Section 5.

## **2. Complaint**

A refund may be offered should a complaint relating to course quality or delivery be upheld.

All complaints are subject to the College's Complaints Procedure and should be directed to the Director of Pastoral and Academic Progress ([info@macclesfield.ac.uk](mailto:info@macclesfield.ac.uk)). The complaint will be logged and investigated by the Director of Pastoral and Academic Progress. At the conclusion of the investigation, a report shall be presented to the Vice Principal: Finance and Resources, who will determine if a refund should be made.

Should a refund be approved, the Director of Pastoral and Academic Progress will arrange to prepare a Request for Refund Form (**Appendix 1**) to confirm the complaint decision (approved), and to initiate the refund. Copies of the request shall be passed to the Director of MIS and to the Finance Manager.

A refund will be prepared by the Finance Department and paid within 14 days of receiving the approved request. The Finance Manager shall arrange for the student to be notified of the refund payment.

Should a refund be declined, the Director of Pastoral and Academic Progress will advise the student of the outcome, and further advise that an appeal may be submitted to the Vice Principal of Curriculum and Quality within 5 working days if dissatisfied with the decision.

A Request for Refund Form shall continue to be completed to confirm the complaint decision (refused), and instruct the Finance Department that no refund is due.

### **3. Student Request Prior to Course Start Date**

Students enrolling in advance and subsequently wishing to withdraw prior to the course commencing shall be entitled to a refund in full, provided that the College is notified of this intention at least **five working days prior to the start date** of the course.

A request to withdraw should be submitted in writing to the Programme Leader and to Learner Experience ([info@macclesfield.ac.uk](mailto:info@macclesfield.ac.uk)). The student should aim to ensure that confirmation of this request has been received and acknowledged by the College.

A Request for Refund should be prepared by the Programme Leader and passed to the Finance Department for payment within 14 days of receipt. The Finance Manager shall arrange for the student to be notified of the refund payment.

### **4. Exceptional Circumstances**

Should a request be received to withdraw owing to personal circumstances once a course has commenced, a refund will not normally be given unless exceptional circumstances can be clearly demonstrated. All requests for a fee waiver in these circumstances should be submitted in writing to the Programme Leader, with a copy to the Finance Department.

Exceptional circumstances may include: -

- Death of spouse / partner, parent or child;
- Serious physical or mental illness that prevents the student from continuing with his or her studies;
- Serious personal injury that prevents the student from continuing with his or her studies.

The above list is not exhaustive, and each request will require the submission of certified medical or other documentary evidence.

Note. The student should consider the decision to withdraw carefully, and is advised to approach their Programme Leader and / or Student Services initially to determine what options are available to them, and the likely financial consequences resulting from their withdrawal.

#### **4.1 Suspension (deferrals)**

Should a student wish to suspend their studies with the intention of returning at a later date (as opposed to withdrawing from the course entirely), this must be agreed with and approved by the Programme Leader initially. An agreed date of return should be confirmed with the Programme Leader and communicated to Student Services.

The Programme Leader shall be responsible for ensuring that a completed Request for Refund Form is prepared, which confirms the prior discussions and exceptional circumstances leading to the suspension of the course. The student may be required to submit a separate written letter addressed to the Programme Leader to support the exceptional or extenuating circumstances leading to the request, which should be appended to the form.

The completed, approved document shall in turn inform the MIS Team, Finance Department and Student Services of the status of the student.

The Finance Manager shall arrange for a Credit Letter to be issued to the student to confirm that any fees paid to date shall be held on account, and the agreed expiry date. A signed acknowledgement of this understanding must be returned by the student to confirm the arrangement.

Should the student not choose to return to continue their course by the agreed date or does not return a signed acknowledgement of the arrangement, all fees held on account shall be retained and any fees that remain outstanding shall be subject to the College Debt Recovery Procedures.

The College reserves the right to refuse any such request to defer or suspend studies, particularly where this may have an adverse impact on existing courses and / or students.

#### 4.2 Withdrawal

Should a student wish to withdraw from their studies and does not intend to return at a later date, this again must be agreed with and approved by the Programme Leader initially (and with the Head of Higher Education for all Higher Education courses).

The Programme Leader shall be responsible for ensuring that a completed Refund Request Form is prepared, which confirms the extenuating circumstances leading to the withdrawal from the course. The student should submit a separate written letter addressed to the Programme Leader confirming reasons for withdrawal, which should be appended to the form.

The completed, approved Request for Refund document and any supporting information should be passed directly to the Finance Manager, who shall consider the withdrawal request and reasons for withdrawal, in order to assess and confirm the financial impact and outstanding liability.

The Finance Department shall collate the following information for submission to the Vice Principal: Finance and Resources to obtain a decision on whether a refund may be approved.:

- Request for Refund form
- MIS Change of Circumstances confirmation (if already withdrawn)
- Supporting evidence of reason for withdrawal

Should a refund be approved, the Finance Department shall arrange for a Credit Note (signed by the Finance Manager), to be raised against the appropriate account and a proportionate refund of any fees paid to date where necessary in accordance with the Refund Policy.

Should the refund request be refused, the Finance Manager shall arrange for a letter to be issued to the student to advise them of the decision of the College, the outstanding financial liability and that College Debt Recovery procedures shall commence.

Please note that withdrawals in terms of possible financial liability from Higher Education or Further Education courses is treated differently and is outlined below. Note that Access to Higher Education courses are classed as Further Education courses and not Higher Education.

## Withdrawals - Higher Education

Should a refund request receive approval following withdrawal from a Higher Education course, the amounts refunded shall be subject to guidance contained within the **Higher Education Fee Payment Policy**, and a tiered system of financial liability based on the following date criteria:

### September starts

| Withdrawal Date   | % of Fees Liability |
|---|---------------------|
| On or before 30 <sup>th</sup> September                       | 0%                  |
| Between 1 <sup>st</sup> October and 31 <sup>st</sup> December | 50%                 |
| On or after 1 <sup>st</sup> January                           | 100%                |

### January starts

| Withdrawal Date   | % of Fees Liability |
|---|---------------------|
| On or before 31 <sup>st</sup> January                       | 0%                  |
| Between 1 <sup>st</sup> February and 30 <sup>th</sup> April | 50%                 |
| On or after 1 <sup>st</sup> May                             | 100%                |

## Withdrawals – Further Education

Should a refund request receive approval following withdrawal from a Further Education full cost course of Level 3 or above owing to exceptional or extenuating circumstances, the amount to be refunded shall be subject to a tiered system of financial liability based on attendance criteria:

| Withdrawal Date                         | % of Fees Liability |
|---|---------------------|
| Within 2 weeks of the course start date | 0%                  |
| After 2 weeks of the course start date  | 100%**              |

\*\* A credit note may be applied to the outstanding balance where qualifying circumstances (as outlined within Section 4 of the Policy) can be clearly demonstrated. The value of any credit note applied will be subject to deductions based on actual attendance to date at the point of withdrawal.

Any fees paid in excess of the pro-rata financial liability shall be refunded.

Should the course fees have been part or fully funded through Advanced Learner Loan, any loan payments received by the College at the time of withdrawal shall be deducted from the total amount owed, and the balance remaining shall be collected in accordance with College Debt Recovery procedures.

## Withdrawals – General / All Other Courses

No refunds shall be granted for any other course withdrawals.

## Withdrawals – Debt Recovery

It should be reiterated that refunds in respect of withdrawals shall only be considered in exceptional circumstances, where extenuating circumstances can clearly be evidenced.

The student shall remain liable for all fees due unless a withdrawal request / fee waiver is approved, and irrespective of loan application status and payments received by the College to the date of withdrawal.

The College debt recovery processes shall apply where fees remain outstanding until a withdrawal / fee waiver has been approved, or where a refund request is refused following withdrawal.

The College may pass your details to a third-party collection agency to support debt recovery action should fees owing to the College remain outstanding beyond their due date, in accordance with Article 6(1)(b) of the General Data Protection Regulation.

## 5. Forms of Refund Payment

| Payment Method | Payment Details   |
|----------------|---|
| Online         | Online payments shall be refunded online to the same bank account.  |
| BACS           | All payments of refunds shall be made by BACS where bank details are available.   |
| Card           | Payments originally made by card payment shall be refunded to the same card where possible.   |
| Cheque         | Cheque payments shall be made where bank details are unavailable.   |
| Cash           | No refunds shall be made in cash.<br>Any payment of fees by this method shall be refunded by BACS where bank details are available; else payment shall be made by cheque. |

All refund payments shall be made within 14 days of the date that the approved Request for Refund is received within the Finance Department.

**REQUEST FOR: REFUND / FEE WAIVER/  
CREDIT NOTE (Individual requests)**



| 1. REFUND / FEE WAIVER / CREDIT NOTE DETAILS  |  |                           |
|---|--|---------------------------|
| Requested By:   |  | Date Requested:           |
| Student Name:   |  | Student No:               |
| Course Title:   |  |                           |
| Course Code:  | Start Date:  | Refund / Waiver Amount: £ |
| Reason for Request (delete as appropriate):<br><br>Please pass for authorisation once completed   | Cancellation / Complaint / Withdrawal / Overpayment / Other (state below): |                           |
|   |  |                           |
|   |  |                           |
| <b>Note:</b> Please ensure any supporting evidence / reasons for the request are attached to the refund request. In the event of a withdrawal, please ensure that the student is made aware of any financial implications as detailed in the College Refund Policy. |  |                           |

| 2. AUTHORISATION TO PROCESS REFUND / FEE WAIVER / CREDIT NOTE |  |
|---|--|
| Please tick appropriate option                                |  |
| Approved: <input type="checkbox"/>                            | Issue Refund / Credit Note / Credit Letter (delete as appropriate) |
| Refused: <input type="checkbox"/>                             | Refusal Letter Issued Date (if applicable):     /     /            |
| Reason for option chosen:                                     |  |
| Authorised By (Name):   | Authorised Signature:  |
| Authorised Date:  |  |

| 3. FINANCE USE  |  |               |
|---|--|---------------|
| <b>3A. Confirmation of Prior Related Payments</b>   | <b>3B. Refund Details</b>  |               |
| Amounts Paid to College: £  | Amount to Repay: £   | Date:   /   / |
| Original Payment: Online / Cheque / Instalment / Card / Cash / Bank Transfer (delete as required) | Refund Method: Online / BACS / Cheque / Credit Letter / Refusal Letter |               |
| Paid Date:  | Payment Reference:   |               |
| Evidence Attached By:   | <b>3C. Credit Note Details (if applicable)</b>                         |               |
| Date:   | Credit Note Value: £   | Date:   /   / |
| Additional Comments:  | Credit Note Journal Reference:   |               |
|   | Nominal Code:  |               |
| Processed in Finance By:  | Processed Date:  |               |
| Approved By (Finance Manager):  | Approved Date:   |               |

| 4. MIS USE       |             |
|------------------|-------------|
| Database Amended |             |
| Input By:        | Input Date: |

White Copy: Finance Team

Yellow Copy: MIS Team