



Policy on
Refund and Compensation for Higher Education Policy

Approved on 30th June 2026

Approved by
Senior Leadership Team

Policy Title	Refund and Compensation for Higher Education
Document Owner	Chief Financial Officer
Directorates and Departments affected by this Policy	All Staff
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New College Durham is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, as well as vulnerable adults, and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment.

If you require this document in an alternative format and/or language, please contact records@newdur.ac.uk

We review our policies regularly to update them and to ensure that they are accessible and fair to all. All policies are subject to equality impact assessments which are carried out to determine whether the policy has, or is likely to have, a different impact on those with protected characteristics. We are always keen to hear from anyone who wants to contribute to these impact assessments and we welcome suggestions for improving the accessibility of fairness of this and all College policies.

Other policies and procedures mentioned in this document will be published on our [Website](#)

To make suggestions or to see further information please contact:

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1. Scope and Purpose

- 1.1 This policy sets out how the College will authorise and administer refunds and compensation in order to protect the consumer rights of students. It operates in line with the Consumer Rights Act 2015 and will apply to all Higher Education students of New College Durham, irrespective of the funding arrangements in place for their programme.
- 1.2 For the purpose of this policy:
- Refund refers to the repayment of tuition fees or other charges where the service has not been delivered.
 - Compensation refers to financial and/or non-financial remedies provided where a student has experienced loss, disruption or disadvantage.
- 1.3 Compensation may include:
- Financial compensation (e.g. reimbursement of costs, partial fee waivers)
 - Non-financial remedies (e.g. repeat teaching, alternative provision)
 - Academic remedies (where appropriate)
- 1.4 The College will ensure that decisions relating to refunds and compensation are:
- Fair, transparent and proportionate.
 - Consistent and evidence-based.
 - Clearly communicated to students.
- 1.5 In the unlikely event that the College is unable to preserve continuity of study for a student, the College may, in order to protect the consumer rights of students, refund tuition fees, other relevant costs, and/or pay compensation.
- 1.6 Refunds and compensation are considered a remedy of last resort. The College will take all reasonable steps to enable students to continue and complete their studies.
- 1.7 This policy supports the College's Student Protection Plan by setting out the financial remedies available where continuation of study cannot be preserved.

2. Relationship with Other Policies

- 2.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with:
- Complaints Policy.
 - Student Protection Plan.
 - Academic Appeals Policy and Procedure.
 - Higher Education Withdrawal Policy.

Other policies and procedures mentioned in this document will be published on our [Website](#)

- 2.2 Where a matter falls under more than one policy, the College will determine the most appropriate process or apply multiple processes where necessary.
- 2.3 This policy does not apply to matters relating to academic judgement, which are covered under the Academic Appeals Procedure.

3. Responsibilities

- 3.1 The Chief Financial Officer is responsible for ensuring a policy is in place defining responsibility for the procedures and management of Refunds and Compensation.
- 3.2 Any refunds or compensation payments will be agreed by the Chief Financial Officer in agreement with the Deputy Principal or Vice Principal for HE who will be responsible for adjudicating compensation claims.
- 3.3 The Head of Finance is responsible for ensuring this policy is maintained, monitored and disseminated, ensuring responsibility for procedures are clearly assigned.
- 3.4 The Head of Student Conduct and Administrative Services is responsible for processing Complaints as described in the College's Complaints Policy.
- 3.5 The Treasury Manager (Income) is responsible for ensuring all tuition fees refund enquiries are processed in a timely manner and any compensation is paid in accordance with the procedure detailed in this Refund and Compensation Policy.
- 3.6 Programme Teams are responsible for monitoring and recording engagement and attendance to allow them to identify where a student is not attending/engaging as described in the Student Engagement in Learning Policy and the HE Withdrawal Policy.
- 3.7 External partners - It is expected that any partners will have a Withdrawal Policy that mirrors the requirements of the New College Durham Policy. College staff are expected to be familiar with this policy and to contribute to its effective implementation. The policy can be viewed under the Higher Education Section of the College Website.
- 3.8 Students can request a refund by contacting the income team at the following email address - income@newdur.ac.uk
- 3.9 Students may request a review, submit a complaint under the Complaints Policy, or refer the matter to the OIA following completion of procedures.

4. Tuition Fee liability where a student is withdrawn

- 4.1 Students are expected to notify the College of their intention to withdraw. The College will also take reasonable steps to contact students where engagement has ceased to confirm their status before applying full fee liability.
- 4.2 Engagement includes (but is not limited to):
- Attendance at timetabled sessions.
 - Submission of assessed work.
 - Participation in online learning environments.
- 4.3 The College will ensure that fee liability is applied in a fair and proportionate manner, taking account of individual circumstances where appropriate.
- 4.4 Students that withdraw from a course of study may be liable to pay tuition fees for all or part of the academic year as detailed below. Before withdrawing, students are encouraged to discuss matters in detail with the academic department, the Income Team and Advice Support Careers (ASC) teams.
- 4.5 On submission of a formal withdrawal notification to the CIS Department the College will record the event and make appropriate adjustment to the tuition fees as stated below. Without this information a student is liable for the full tuition fee. The College and its External partners are expected to process all withdrawals to meet the service standards set out by the Student Loans Company in the HEP/SLC Service Agreement.
- 4.6 If a student suspends their studies with the intention of returning to the College at a later date, they will continue to be liable for the tuition fees.
- 4.7 **Tuition Fee liability for withdrawal/suspension from studies**

The College will charge the student fees for every term that the student attended the College in line with tuition fee loan dates set by the Student Loans Company (SLC). If the student leaves in term one, two or three, the College will charge the student the following:

- Term one: 25% fees (beyond the third week)
- Term two: 50% fees
- Term three: 100% fees

- 4.8 All Refunds will be made back to the original source e.g., Student Loans Company (SLC), Student or Sponsor.
- 4.9 In cases of hardship a recommendation can be made to the Chief Financial Officer who will make the final decision.
- 4.10 The College will take reasonable steps to ensure students are aware of the financial implications of withdrawal.

5. Compensation and Student Protection

- 5.1 Compensation may include reimbursement of additional costs, financial payments, or non-financial remedies.
- 5.2 Refunds and/or compensation may be considered where:
- The College is unable to deliver a programme as described.
 - There is significant disruption to learning.
 - The student incurs additional, unavoidable costs as a result of College actions.
 - The College fails to meet its obligations under the student contract.
- 5.3 The College recognises that disruption may arise from:
- Industrial action.
 - Public health emergencies (e.g. pandemics).
 - Loss of key staff or facilities.
 - IT system failures.
- 5.3 Where the College is unable to teach out a programme and a transfer is required, the College will support the student in transferring to an alternative provider. Where this results in additional costs, reimbursement will be considered on a case-by-case basis, subject to evidence and in line with this policy.
- 5.4 The additional costs reimbursed might include the following:
- Travel expenses in excess of the student's current cost of travel;
 - Assistance towards accommodation and subsistence if the transfer would mean that it would be impractical for the student to travel to your place of teaching on a regular basis;
 - Childcare where the transfer has necessitated additional arrangements for childcare needing to be put in place to complete the period of study at the College.
- 5.5 Additional payments will be assessed based on:

- Evidence of additional costs incurred.
 - Proportionality of the claim.
 - The extent to which the disruption was within the College's control.
- 5.6 Where it is agreed that the College will meet additional costs as a result of transferring, these costs will be made at the beginning of the Semester while the student continues to study on their current course.
- 5.7 When determining compensation, the College may consider:
- Direct financial loss.
 - Additional costs incurred.
 - Distress and inconvenience (where appropriate)
- 5.8 Any compensation awarded will be reasonable and proportionate to the impact experienced.
- 5.9 If having transferred from New College Durham to a new provider the student decides to transfer again to another institution to complete the course, the reimbursements will cease and the student will be asked to repay any monies received in advance.
- 5.10 In the event that a student who transfers is in receipt of a College scholarship or bursary the College would maintain and continue to pay the scholarship or bursary for the duration of the award given. If having transferred from New College Durham to a new provider the student decides to transfer again to another institution to complete the course, the entitlement to New College Durham scholarship or bursary will cease and the student will be asked to repay any monies received in advance.
- 5.11 In the event of a transfer not being possible a refund will be made for the element of the Programme that had not been provided but where fees have been paid.
- 5.12 Refunds detailed above in respect of students in receipt of tuition fees from the SLC will be repaid direct to the SLC by the College.
- 5.13 Refunds in respect of students who pay their own fees, or which are paid by a sponsor, will be repaid to the original source of funding.
- 5.14 Compensation in respect of maintenance and lost time, where it is not possible to preserve continuation of study, will be assessed on a case by case basis and on the basis of additional costs having been incurred.
- 5.15 Students are expected to take reasonable steps to mitigate any losses incurred.

5.16 The College will, where appropriate, consult affected students when determining appropriate remedies.

6. Payments of Refunds

6.1 Students may request a refund or compensation directly through the College. A request for a refund or compensation is not, in itself a complaint. In some cases, students may also choose to raise concerns initially through the Complaints Policy where the issue relates to service delivery.

6.2 Where a student is dissatisfied with the outcome of a refund or compensation decision, they may request a review or escalate the matter under the College's Complaints Policy.

6.3 Students should submit requests including:

- Details of the issue.
- Supporting evidence (where applicable)

6.4 The College will:

- Acknowledge receipt within (5 working days).
- Provide a decision within (20 working days).

Timescales for refund and compensation requests differ from those within the Complaints Policy due to the financial assessment and verification processes required. The outcome will be communicated in writing, including the reasons for the decision.

6.5 If a student is dissatisfied with the decision, they may request a review within 10 working days of the outcome.

6.6 Following completion of internal procedures, students may refer the matter to the Office of Independent Adjudicators (OIA). Where applicable, the College will issue a Completion of Procedures letter to enable this.

6.7 Refunds will be considered on a case-by-case basis in line with this policy, taking into account the circumstances and supporting evidence provided. Students must not intentionally overpay their fees in order to obtain their living costs or circumvent any government regulation or restriction. Any fee payments received intended for living costs will, upon receipt of a refund request, be returned to the original sender in compliance with UK money laundering legislation in force.

- 6.8 All authorised refunds are returned to source. For fees that are paid by credit or debit card (either online or offline) refunds will be credited back to the card charged with the original payment.
- 6.9 Approved refunds will be processed within 14 calendar days of the decision.
If the student has a recorded debt to the College, any requested fee refund may be with-held and applied to the outstanding balance.
- 6.10 In very exceptional circumstances where a refund must be made to someone other than the original payer (e.g. a parent/carer), authorisation must be obtained from the original payer prior to the refund being processed.
- 6.11 This Policy does not cover the following:
- Library debts – please contact College Library.
 - Trips – please contact your school.

7. Evaluation and Review

The effectiveness of this policy will be monitored annually and reviewed every five years in light of experience and best practice. This mechanism recognises that changes to legislation may prompt a review of the policy before the five years stipulated.

8. Transparency and Communication

- 8.1 The College will ensure that:
- This policy is easily accessible to applicants and students.
 - Key information is communicated clearly and in plain English.
 - Any material changes are communicated in a timely manner and in a durable format.