



## Student Fees Policy

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Author: R Elbourne	Review: March 2024
Administered: CEO	Signed:

### 1 Purpose

Hunter Trade College is committed to having a fair and just fee structure for student enrolment and associated College activities.

The College also expects that payment of these fees will occur on time.

This policy sets guidelines for:

- setting student fees
- providing concessions, discounts and waivers that are available to debtors,
- payment and refund of College fees, recognition of bad and doubtful debts
- setting College incentives.

### 2 Scope

This policy applies to College directors and executive and administrative staff responsible for implementing the policy.

### 3 Definitions

Term	Meaning
Bad and doubtful debts	Outstanding College Fees deemed unlikely to be received by the College
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CRN	Customer Reference Number (Centrelink)
Debtors	Parents/caregivers/independent students who owe the College fees, charges, levies
DMI	Direct Measure of Income (used to calculate funding %)
Executive	CEO, Business Manager
Fee discounts	Includes concessions and waivers
HSC	Higher School Certificate
the College	Hunter Trade College

## 4 Responsibilities

College Board	Approve College Fee increases above Education CPI as listed in ABS statistics <a href="http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/6401.0">http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/6401.0</a>
CEO	Set College Fees Approve fee discounts, waivers and expenditures on awards Address conflicts of interest
Business Manager	Calculate and recommend to the CEO any change to College fees Approve fee discounts and waivers Address conflicts of interest
Debtors	Pay all fees, levies, charges Communicate openly, honestly and promptly about any fee-related issue

## 5 Policy and Procedures

### 5.1 Background

In setting fees, the College acknowledges the socioeconomic status (SES) of the communities from which students come.

The Australian Government assesses how much federal and state government funding contributes to the cost of educating a student. The Australian Government contributes a maximum of 90% for independent schools compared to government schools.

The Australian Government determines the funding allocation using a direct measure of income model (DMI). The DMI model produces a capacity to contribute score (CTC). The CTC determines the percentage of fees the government considers College families should pay towards the cost of their child's education and discounts the government contribution accordingly.

The College considers this background information when reviewing student fees.

The College provides a range of concessions, discounts, and scholarships to make specialist education affordable for parents/carers with lesser capacity to contribute towards the cost of education for their young person.

### 5.2 College Fees

#### 5.2.1 Setting Fees

The College reviews its student fees in Term 1 each year before opening enrolments for the following year. The College checks for fee relativity against Maitland-Newcastle Diocesan Catholic Schools. These schools serve the same education sector.

The College also examines the Consumer Price Index movement, particularly the Education CPI. It considers unemployment levels in the drawing area.

The CEO may set fees within the Education CPI movement. Fee increases beyond this index require Board approval.

## 5.2.2 Discounts

Discounts require CEO or Business Manager approval for each student application.

Discount	Details
Family Discount	<p>A discount applies to families with more than one student enrolled at the College simultaneously.</p> <p>The College reviews the discount annually, basing the discount on the cost of the College uniform for one student. (One pair of safety boots, two pairs of drill pants and three shirts).</p> <p>Discount rates reflect the pricing from the College's student uniform supplier.</p>
Low-Income Fee Relief	<p>The College offers a low-income fee concession to 'means-tested' families such as Health Care and Pension Card holders.</p> <p>The concession is subject to confirmation by Centrelink that the Health Care card relates to low-income provisions.</p> <p>The parent/carer must complete a CCES (Customer Centrelink Consent Form), providing their CRN to the College.</p> <p>The concession is additional to any other discounts or concessions for the family/student.</p> <p>The discount applies only to the College Fee. The discount does not apply to any other fee or deposit.</p> <p>Parents/carers must apply for low-income fee relief each year of enrolment.</p>
Additional Fee Relief	<p>A genuine inability to pay College Fees should not prevent a student from attending the College. Fee relief applies to any family experiencing extenuating financial difficulties.</p> <p>Fee relief is available up to a full fee waiver. Families must apply to the CEO or Business Manager, who will treat all discussions with understanding and confidentiality. The College will not refuse a student enrolment because of a family's financial status.</p>
College Scholarships	<p>The College recognises the critical role of welfare agencies in the region working with young people who are disadvantaged or at risk. Welfare agencies working with young people seeking to commence a trade career may apply to the College for a scholarship. The scholarship will exempt the application, acceptance, and annual College fees.</p> <p>To secure a scholarship, students must meet the College's enrolment requirements.</p> <p>Each agency may apply for up to three scholarships per year. The scholarship does not cover the cost of First Aid, White Card, or Working at Heights courses or any other course specific fee.</p>

Discount	Details
Other Scholarships	<p>The College may receive funds from third parties to provide scholarships to students. These scholarships will be made available on agreed criteria between the sponsor and the College.</p> <p>The College also actively seeks scholarship support for students in financial hardship from organisations and associations that provide such scholarships. The College helps students and families to apply for these scholarships.</p>

### 5.3 Payment of College Fees

#### 5.3.1 Application Fee

All prospective students must complete entry tests to assess their suitability for enrolment. The application fee covers the testing cost and is reviewed annually in line with movements in costs. Payment is due before commencing the test.

#### 5.3.2 Acceptance Deposit

Once the College makes an offer of enrolment to a student, it requires an acceptance deposit to confirm the student's position. The allocated place is considered vacant until the parent/carer/independent student pays the acceptance deposit. The College may fill the vacancy with any subsequent student who pays their acceptance deposit.

The acceptance deposit is a sign of good faith that the parent/carer intends their young person to attend the College.

The acceptance fee is refundable on or after the student completes Year 12. The person making the original payment must apply for a refund. This refund is available until Term 1 of the following year ends. The College will contact parents/carers in Term 3 of Year 12 and before the end of Term 1, the year after the HSC, to remind parents/carers that the refund is available. After Term 1, the College will move the remaining deposits to consolidated revenue.

#### 5.3.3 Annual College Fee

The Annual College Fee is the tuition fee for students.

#### 5.3.4 Fee Agreement

The College accepts full fee payment before the student commences College or pay by instalment through a fee agreement. Parents/carers seeking instalment payments must complete and lodge a fee agreement with the College before commencing their studies at the College.

Payments may be weekly, fortnightly, monthly or each term. Fee Schedules are attached to the fee agreement, and fee payments commence on the first Friday in February.

The College collects Year 11 student fees over four terms and Year 12 student fees over three terms.

### **5.3.5 Fee Waivers & Refunds**

The College applies its fees to each term. If a student withdraws during a term, the fees are payable for that full term. The College will waive the remaining fees for the subsequent full terms the student did not attend.

The CEO or Business Manager may consider and approve additional refunds for extenuating circumstances.

The College will refund excess fees paid in advance, taking into account any discounts (pro-rata) the student received

The student must complete a withdrawal form and return all College property before the College pays the refund.

The College will deduct any outstanding amounts for fees and charges from funds paid in advance before making a refund.

### **5.4 Other Fees and Charges**

As part of "work readiness" requirements, students must complete a First Aid and the General Construction Induction Course (White Card). Construction students must also complete the Working at Heights course. Students who can provide current certificates or cards will have these courses credited and the fees waived. Students who enrol too late to undertake the classes at the College will need to organise alternate providers. Fees for these courses must be paid in full before the course starts.

#### **5.4.1 First Aid**

The First Aid fee covers the cost of a third party delivering First Aid training. The price will align with the delivery cost from the third party.

#### **5.4.2 General Construction Induction Course (White Card)**

The College delivers the White Card course to students. The fee is lower than the market rate for face-to-face delivery.

#### **5.4.3 Working at Heights Course**

Construction students must complete a Working at Heights Course to ensure worksite safety. This enables students the opportunity to engage in broader work placement opportunities. The course is delivered by the College.

#### **5.4.4 Other courses**

The College may deliver other courses to students if industry feedback indicates the course is necessary for a work placement or traineeship student.

### **5.5 Bad and Doubtful Debts**

The College evaluates all student fee debtors individually throughout the year for the possibility of them defaulting on College fee payments. The College will contact debtors who have not met their fee agreement to assess whether there are extenuating circumstances. These circumstances include financial difficulties or problems with the fee transfer process.

### **5.5.1 Debt Collection Procedures**

The College issues a Notice of Demand letter to debtors who repeatedly fail to honour their financial commitment or maintain contact with the College. The letter outlines their financial responsibility to the College and the requirement to meet their College Fee obligation. After seven days, the College will follow up the letter with a telephone call to the debtor. If the debtor does not answer the telephone call, the College will send a follow-up email/text.

Failure to respond to this letter within 30 days will result in the debt being referred to a debt collection agency to pursue on the College's behalf.

The debt collection agency will send a 7 Day Letter, followed by a Solicitor's Demand Letter if the debt remains unpaid after seven days. The Solicitor's Demand letter gives the debtor an additional 21 days to pay.

Debts are pursued until paid.

### **5.5.2 Recognition of Bad and Doubtful Debts**

The College provides for bad and doubtful debts to prepare the year-end accounts.

#### **Doubtful Debts**

The College recognises doubtful debts as those debtors that have defaulted on their fee agreement and are making periodic payments following contact by the College or debt collection agency. Students may or may not be attending the College.

#### **Bad Debts**

The College recognises bad debts as those debtors that have defaulted on their fee agreement and are not making periodic payments following contact by the College or debt collection agency. Where court proceedings have commenced against a debtor, the debt is treated as a bad debt.

## **6 College Incentives**

### **6.1 Referral Program**

Approximately 80% of students apply for enrolment after a personal referral from previous or current students or their families. The College may establish referral programs where these do not contravene regulatory guidelines. The CEO may activate these programs to boost recruitment activities and will set appropriate monetary values. Guidelines will be developed for each referral program before implementation. The options include:

- A trade tools voucher for a student who refers someone to the College.
- Discounts for parents who recommend other parents to the College
- Other appropriate incentives.

### **6.2 End-of-Year Awards**

The College awards a gift voucher from a trade supplier to recognise the highest achievement in each of the College's courses for Year 11 and Year 12 students. Year 11 receive a \$75.00 gift voucher, and Year 12 students receive a \$100.00 gift voucher.

Other awards may apply from time to time. The CEO approves the level of expenditure for the prize.

## 7 Conflicts of Interest

Staff involved in applying this policy are to declare any conflict of interest and seek approval to proceed before enacting any policy clauses. Staff should consult the Conflict of Interest Policy for clarification and complete any necessary declaration. The CEO or Business Manager will provide the required approval.

## 8 Variation

The College reserves the right to review, vary or revoke this policy and procedure. The policy will undergo review every three years.

## 9 Reference Documents

Internal Documents	External Documents
Code of Conduct Conflict of Interest Policy Fee Information Schedule Forms <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Application for Fee Refund</li><li>• Customer Consent Form for Centrelink</li><li>• Fee Waiver Form</li><li>• Loyalty Program Referral Form</li></ul> Sample Letters: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Letter 1- Reminder of outstanding debt</li><li>• Letter 2 – Notice of Demand</li></ul> Sample Fee Agreement Sponsorship Policy Student Handbook	Education CPI <a href="http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/6401.0">http://www.abs.gov.au/AUSSTATS/abs@.nsf/mf/6401.0</a>

## Document History and Version Control Record | Not for publication

Version	Date	Amended by	Amendment Details
1.0	27.04.2016	T O'Brien	New policy replacing Fee & Refund Policy – Student. The new policy includes discounts, scholarships, waivers, a loyalty program and year-end awards
1.1	26.02.2018	T O'Brien	Include permission to waiver fees to CEO & Business Manager, updated family discount to variable rate from a fixed rate, acceptance fee changed to acceptance deposit and clarification about payment requirements and refund notification. Year 11 school fees changed to 3 terms.
1.2	23.03.2021	R J Elbourne	Extend review date to 3yrs, Update definitions, remove RTO Manager from Executive, add DMI measures, delete references to SBAT, Updated Yr 11 fees over 4 terms, advised \$Nil cost of SBAT program from Jan 2020, more clarity surrounding debt collection guidelines, abolish lottery reward referral scheme, introduce a referral program
1.3	13.04.2023	R J Elbourne	Update section 6.2   Awards set to \$75 for Yr 11 and \$100 Yr 12. Inclusion of Working at Heights course. Small exclusion on debt recovery area not required considering document available on a public website.