

Part Two: Approved Fee and Access Plan published 080822

Fee and Access Plan	
Name of institution	NPTC Group of Colleges
Duration of the fee and access plan	1 August 2023 to 31 July 2025
Section 1 - Fee levels	
Section 1.1 – Fee levels or the determination of a fee level at each location (Guidance paragraphs 88-97)	
Fee level	Location of course
Level IV £7500 Level V £7500	All full-time HE courses (either at HNC or HND) on all campuses will be charged at £7500 pa for 2023/24 and 2024/25, which is within the maximum fee limits.

Section 1.2 - Aggregate fee levels
(Guidance paragraphs 98-102)

This a statement applies to both potential and current student. All fees remain unchanged for 2023/24 and 2024/25 and are set at £7500 pa. The tuition fees on entry are the same as for continuing students and will not be increased for the duration of the course. The aggregate fees will be £7,500 for an HNC and £15,000 for an HND. The College website contains detailed information on HE Fees and Financial Support alongside the Fee Policy, and its terms and conditions, to enable students to be clear on their responsibilities and the total cost of their programme. This complies with the Competition and Markets Authority regulations for HE providers and the College strives to minimise additional costs but details of any additional costs are published in the prospectus and individual programme profiles on the website where appropriate. The College Admissions team communicate fees and funding information directly to applicants at the offer stage. The College hosts a number of HE information events including student finance talks, and provides clear information for parents and students. Fee levels, bursaries and the hardship fund are widely advertised through open events and through publications and online information.

Section 2 - Student Partnership

(Guidance paragraphs 103-106)

The College continues to build on its reputation for providing a supportive learning environment for students through small class sizes, student support services and approachable and supportive lecturers to deliver an outstanding student experience. The College prides itself on working in partnership with students which was reinforced by the submission of a joint self-assessment document and student written submission for the forthcoming QAA review. The College realises the importance of communication to allow effective partnership working and in 2020, the College launched an NPTC Student Community Microsoft Team to provide students with a range of information from Covid-19 updates to help with digital skills, student support, communication from the Students' Union and library information. The Team proved popular, however feedback from higher education students at Senedd indicated that much of the information such as UCAS support and EMA payments, were not relevant to them. A HE Student Community team was developed in partnership with the Students' Union and launched in September 2021 covering a range of topics which has proved to be very popular

Working in partnership with the students has improved over recent years and the engagement with students has actually improved during the pandemic with more students being able to engage in meetings virtually rather than being required to travel across campuses to attend face to face meetings. As the nature of students studying HE in FE is significantly different to students studying at Universities we are required to adapt the university model of student partnership to meet the expectations of our students. Recent examples of this include monthly meetings between the Principal and Chief Executive and the Students' Union President, Student representatives chairing College Committees and the introduction of Specialist Ambassadors to Support Students in; using the College's Assistive Technology, developing student social clubs and in arranging and delivering student activities, who are Looked After or Care Leavers, who are Young Adult Carers and who have Additional Learning Needs. Three specialist ambassadors have been appointed to support HE students. The impact of these HE ambassadors has been significant allowing the College to move forwards with many new initiatives.

The SU President and HE Officer are members of the Board of Governors and HE representation on the SU is formally enshrined in the SU constitution, which states that a dedicated HE Officer must be elected each year. In 2021, the three HE student ambassadors were appointed to work with HE students to ensure that their voice is heard and also to work with staff to ensure that the appropriate mechanisms

are in place to support HE students. The ambassadors worked in partnership with HE students, HE student representatives, the SU, the Senior Student Involvement and Diversity Officer, the Assistant Principal: HE, the HE Manager and HE Leads and:

- be a member of, and report, progress to the College HE Quality Enhancement & Management Group and the College Quality Enhancement Review Project Group and where appropriate identify which issues were raised by students;
- promote resilience, self-efficacy and well-being in HE students through a range of activities;
- increase HE student awareness of what type of student support is available at the College and work with staff to ensure that the appropriate mechanisms are in place to support HE students;
- Communicate with HE students, including those studying PT, in a way that is suitable to them.
- develop student-led case studies, or a series of commentaries or vignettes in preparation for the QAA Quality Enhancement Review that show what it is like to be a HE student and how students' views are considered in decision making processes;
- work in partnership with College staff to make recommendations on appropriate support pathways for HE students. This will involve gaining feedback from HE students about the type of support they would benefit from and representing students in providing feedback to staff.

As part of the SU elections process, HE students are targeted and encouraged to apply for SU officer roles. The SU works closely with the College's pool of student representatives to raise awareness of the SU and its work. All programmes are represented by students who are elected by their peers. The role of representatives is supported by Student Services and annual training events are provided. Whilst training is provided jointly to FE reps, officers and student governors, the training is also relevant to the HE student representatives. Furthermore, as the time commitment that is required to be a member of the SU Management team is considerable and there have been challenges in ensuring that the HE representatives on the SU Management team are able to contribute fully to the SU, we introduced three sabbatical posts. These sabbatical officers and specialist HE ambassadors represent and communicate with students in different activities including the development of the Fee and Access Plan.

The SU Management team regularly meet with the Senior Student Involvement and Diversity Officer to discuss objectives and progress. Formal SU Officers' induction is provided by the APHE, to discuss the HE strategy, Student Charter, student bursaries and to identify the under-represented groups that need support through the fee and access plan. The College places students at the centre of their learning experience and values their feedback and contributions. As an FEI providing HE, students are taught in small groups and benefit from the good relationships they develop with staff at College. This allows them the opportunity to regularly provide feedback via informal and formal

processes. However, in contrast there are several challenges of being a small provider of HE courses including the challenge of receiving formal feedback from students. Additionally, the small number of HE students are spread across the five campuses restricting the opportunity for shared activities. The SU management team represents the student body, providing a student voice throughout the organisation from programme level to the Board of Governors. Students are placed at the heart of the learning experience and their views are regularly considered and are highly valued. The Student Charter was reviewed by the Students' Union management team and the fee and access plan targets were shared with the SU Management team and the HE student ambassadors.

The Senior Officer for Student Involvement and Diversity has improved interaction with the student body and this dedicated post provides the focus required to fully implement the student involvement and to oversee the transition of involvement activities from the current staff led to student led. This new post has put student engagement and participation at the centre of the College's strategic planning and delivery framework and to help build a strong and resilient student community where the principles of equality, diversity and respect inform all student involvement activities. Information from the NSS and internal surveys provides useful feedback on student satisfaction with the College and the SU.

All provision at the College is designed to be accessible to all and to be flexible to suit the learners' needs. The modes of delivery vary and there are opportunities for those who need to fit their study in and around their working or caring responsibilities. A variety of mechanisms, including the offering of bursaries and an HE Hardship Fund, timetabling to fit around family and parenting commitments, are designed to accommodate those who need to work and those that wish to volunteer alongside their studies. Access and referral to advice and support is made as easy as possible, including finance, careers, counselling, mental health, enterprise and study skill support. Traditionally HE in FE enjoy smaller group sizes and informal as well as formal contact with lecturers and a personal tutor provides individual pastoral care and support. The student body are engaged in regular communication with their HE Coordinators who meet termly to share student views with the other HE Coordinators and relevant staff. Finally, engagement of the student body with the fee and access plan is undertaken when the fee and access plan is discussed at the Governing Board.

Section 3 - Under-represented groups

(Guidance paragraphs 107-113)

The College will support the following groups which are considered by HEFCW to be under-represented in higher education. We identify some of these in our national measures, the Reaching Wider Programme and in our Strategic Equality Plan. We will support all under-represented groups listed in HEFCW's national measures and specifically:

- Students of all ages from the bottom two quintiles of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2014.
- Students of all ages from the bottom quintile of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2014.
- Students of all ages that would benefit from studying part-time Higher Education.
- Students of all ages studying through the medium of Welsh.

The Reaching Wider Groups we support are:

- priority groups in the bottom two quintiles (40% of the population) of the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) should continue to be:
 - young people up to 16; and
 - adults over 21 years of age without level 4 qualifications.
- care experienced learners and carers in all age groups in their region regardless of WIMD 40.

In addition, new RW priority groups, living in the bottom two quintiles of WIMD, in their Partnership's region will include:

- post-16 young people in up to level 4 learning, in addition to adults without level 4 qualifications;
- people with disabilities;
- people from ethnic minority backgrounds; and
- Welsh medium learning, including supporting second language learning and Welsh cultures.


Section 4 – Objectives as they relate to supporting equality of opportunity and the promotion of HE (Guidance paragraphs 114-148)	
Section 4.1 - Equality of Opportunity	
Objective EO1	Objective 1: Attract more under-represented populations into HE - students who are domiciled in the bottom one/two quintiles of Lower Super Output Areas in the WIMD or who study part-time (EO1)
Objective EO2	Objective 2: Maintain retention and completion particularly for students domiciled in the bottom two quintiles of WIMD (EO2)
Section 4.2 – Promotion of higher education	
Objective PHE1	Objective 1: Increase the number of students studying through the medium of Welsh via greater accessibility to, and involvement in the Welsh Language and activities that support the use of Welsh Language (PHE1)
Objective PHE2	Objective 2: Improve the quality of the student teaching and learning experience (PHE2)

Authorisation of the fee and access plan application to HEFCW (required for publication)

In authorising fee and access plan applications, the governing body:

- i. confirms that it continues to be an institution that provides higher education in Wales and is a charity.
- ii. has seen and considered appropriate evidence to support the declarations being made in this application.
- iii. confirms that there has been appropriate consultation with its students, both those studying at the institution and at other providers where education is delivered on its behalf.
- iv. confirms that the information provided in this fee and access plan application is accurate and current, at the time of writing, and is based on verifiable data.
- v. confirms that: **[delete one or more statements, as appropriate]**
 - a. it is acceptable for HEFCW to use financial, quality and/or other information/data that it holds about a currently regulated institution, regardless of whether the information/data was originally provided for purposes of regulation under the 2015 Act
- vi. understands that HEFCW reserves the right to undertake a visit to the institution to better understand eligibility related to the organisation and management of financial affairs, the data submitted on fee and access plans and/or the quality of education provided on, or on behalf of, the institution.
- vii. understands that it must provide HEFCW and/or HEFCW's agent, with information, assistance and access to its facilities and the facilities of other bodies providing higher education on its behalf.
- viii. understands that HEFCW may carry out, or arrange for an agent to carry out, a review relating to the quality of education provided by, or on behalf of the institution, and its governing body must take into account any advice given to it by HEFCW or the body appointed by HEFCW for this purpose.
- ix. confirms that all education provided by, or on its behalf, regardless of the level or location of the provision has been taken into account in this fee and access plan application.

- x. confirms that the institution is at a low risk of failure on financial grounds over the medium- to long- term.
- xi. confirms that the accounts are audited each year by a registered auditor and that the registered auditor is not the same firm and/or individual that prepared the accounts.
- xii. confirms that the institution complies with Competition and Markets Authority (CMA) guidelines for higher education.
- xiii. understands that any financial commitments to students made in the fee and access plan, as approved by HEFCW, must be honoured.
- xiv. confirms that it will continue to invest the same proportion of full-time undergraduate fee income to promote equality of opportunity and promote higher education and not reduce invest to promote equality of opportunity which is intended to support only under-represented in higher education.
- xv. confirms that it will continue to invest its institutional contribution to the Reaching Wider Programme aligned to its agreed Reaching Wider Strategy and Implementation Plan.
- xvi. confirms that it will maintain student support levels.
- xvii. confirms that the institution will ensure that a copy of the fee and access plan can be made accessible to its students in any format.
- xviii. confirms that the institution will clearly signpost its students to HEFCW's complaints processes.
- xix. take all reasonable steps to supporting under-represented groups that are studying for postgraduate courses. NA
- xx. considers how investment can best support students most impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic where they are not already identified as under-represented groups.

Fee and access plan application submission to HEFCW ¹	
Date of Governing Body approval:	12 May 2022
Governing Body authorised signature:	 Rhobert Lewis, Chair of the Corporation Board
Date:	Friday 13 May 2022
Final fee and access plan submission once HEFCW has confirmed it has no further issues (where applicable)	
Date of Governing Body approval:	
Governing Body authorised signature:	
Date:	

¹ Fee and access plans published on the institution's websites must only include versions approved by HEFCW.