

## REFUNDS POLICY

### 1 Introduction

Orbital South Colleges Group (comprising East Surrey College, incorporating Reigate School of Art and John Ruskin College) assumes that all prospective students will have carefully considered the potential costs involved in taking up a course before making the decision to enrol. These costs will include, but are not limited to:

- course tuition fees payable to the College Group
- resource fees (e.g. materials for practical sessions) payable to the College Group
- qualification / registration fees payable to awarding bodies and external organisations.
- other costs that may be incurred for additional educational visits, criminal records bureau checks and other incidental charges where relevant.

### 2 Refund Eligibility

- If a course is cancelled by the College Group, all fees (or pro-rated, part paid fees) will automatically be refunded.
- If, following enrolment, additional information and supporting documentation determines a student is entitled to full funding in line with the current year Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), Funding Guidance, fees will be refunded.
- The College Group runs its programmes only if the courses recruit viable student numbers. In students leaving the course mid-term, the cost of running the course becomes unaffordable, affecting the College Group's ability to run its programmes in the future. For this reason, the College Group policy is to refuse any refunds except in the most serious circumstances. Where these circumstances comprise of illness, or other significant untoward events, which mean that the student cannot continue with the course, then course, resource and qualification fees may only be refunded on the presentation of evidence of a medical certificate or substantial independent evidence and at the discretion of the Chief Operating Officer. An administration fee of £30.00 will be applied. External qualification fees will not be refunded and a resource fee refund will take account of materials used and / or educational visits that have taken place.
- Fees will not be refunded where a course closure is temporary due to power failure, extreme weather, sudden staff sickness, fire, flood or industrial action. In the event of a cancelled session, the College Group will endeavour to ensure that any missed content is covered in the remaining available weeks.

- The College Group complies with the Consumer Contracts Regulations (CCRs) regarding the sale of products or services to consumers. More detailed information regarding the CCR's can be found on the Office of Fair Trading website at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/3134/contents/made>

### **3 University/Higher Education Programs of Study**

The relationship between Higher Education (HE) students and the College Group is governed by consumer law. The Competition & Markets Authority provides advice on the information that needs to be provided to prospective HE students prior to application and between the application and offer stages. Guidance is also given on the complaints handling process and cancellation rights (see DSR's information above) applicable to HE programmes.

Possible outcomes from a complaints process relating to a HE study program may include either a full or partial refund of the total costs incurred.

### **4 Student Protection Plan**

The Office for Students (OfS) requires the College Group to publish a Student Protection Plan incorporating an assessment of the range of risks to the continuation of study for our students, the risk mitigation measures we have in place and the arrangements for supporting students in the event that the College Group is no longer able to preserve continuation of study. This includes policies and procedures that the College Group has in place to ensure students are not financially disadvantaged in the event that due to any of the identified risks occurring, they are not able to continue their studies here.

### **5 Payment**

If a student has been deemed eligible for a refund, the College Group will endeavour to make refund payments as quickly as possible, but students should be aware that under normal circumstances it may take up to 3 weeks to fully process a refund.

- Refunds are payable by BACS, cheque or credit / debit card.
- Please note we can only process a refund to a credit / debit card if it was the initial method of payment taken, and only to the same card used in that transaction.
- Where a course has been paid for by an Advanced Learner Loan, the College has to inform the Student Loans Company (SLC) via its website of a Change in Circumstance – Fees Charged. The amount is automatically adjusted.
- Cash refunds cannot be made unless in exceptional circumstances authorised by the Chief Operating Officer.

### **6 Access to Policy**

This Policy is available on the College Intranet.

### **7 Training and Guidance**

Questions about this Policy and/or Procedure and requests for training, guidance or information on this Policy and/or Procedure, should be directed to the HR Team.

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### 8 **Mechanisms for Feedback**

Constructive comment on the continued improvement of this policy is welcomed and should be forwarded to the Chief Operating Officer.

### 9 **References**

Consumer Contract Regulations, Student Protection Plan

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| <b>10</b> | <b>Produced by:</b> Head of Finance & Resources     | <b>Date:</b> June 2022    |
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| <b>12</b> | <b>Approved by:</b> Finance and Resources Committee | <b>Date:</b> 23 June 2022 |
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| <b>14</b> | <b>Review by:</b> July 2023                         |                           |
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