Further Education Fee Waiver Policy

Lead Officer (Post):	Information Systems Specialist (Fees and Finance)
Responsible Office/Department:	Student Records, Reporting and MIS
Responsible Committee:	Fee Waiver Policy Ownership Group
Review Officer (Post):	Head of Student Experience
Date policy approved:	26/10/2026
Date policy last reviewed and updated:	09/07/2026
Date policy due for review:	01/06/2027
Date of Equality Impact Assessment:	May 2025
Date of Privacy Impact Assessment:	Not Required

This policy covers the 2026-27 academic year.

Accessible versions of this policy are available upon request.

Policy Summary

Overview	This policy is required to set out a regional approach to Further Education Fee Waivers for UHI Shetland and all academic partners in the University of the Highlands and Islands.
Purpose	The policy will provide a framework for a consistent and coherent methodology for the awarding of Scottish Funding Council and discretionary fee waivers for further education courses.

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Scope	This policy applies to all UHI academic partners who run further education courses.
Consultation	This policy was developed by a Policy Ownership Group, made up of practitioners from across the University of the Highlands and Islands network. Endorsement was received from the Finance Directors Practitioner Group and Partnership Council, before the policy went through local consultation and approval by College Boards of Management.
Implementation and Monitoring	Academic partners will be responsible for implementing and monitoring the policy. Analysis will be carried out of the policy's impact by staff from the Vice-Principal for Further Education's office.
Risk Implications	The policy reduces risk for the University and academic partners by creating a streamlined process and a community of practice for staff. Students will also benefit from a consistent approach across all partners.
Link with Strategy	This policy supports UHI Shetland's Vision of being an inspirational hub of innovation and learning by helping to reduce financial barriers that may prevent learners from accessing further education opportunities. The policy contributes to the following strategic values: • **Working together** by supporting a consistent and equitable approach to fee waivers across UHI academic partners. • **Working for Shetland** by improving access to education and skills development opportunities that meet the needs of individuals, communities and employers.

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	• **Working sustainably** by ensuring fee waiver arrangements are applied through a clear and transparent framework that supports effective use of resources. • **Working to become resilient** by widening participation and supporting learner recruitment, retention and progression. • **Working with partners** through collaboration with UHI academic partners and the Scottish Funding Council in the administration and delivery of fee waiver arrangements.
Impact Assessment	Equality Impact Assessment: Assessed – No further action to be taken.
	Privacy Impact Assessment: Not required.

1. Policy Statement

This document sets out the policy for the awarding of Further Education fee waivers in **UHI Shetland** University of the Highlands and Islands. This policy refers to Scottish Funding Council policy and guidelines on fee waivers, which are reviewed annually. A position is also set out for the awarding of discretionary fee waivers from a College's individual budget.

2. Definitions

2.1 Scottish Funding Council ("SFC"): SFC is the national, strategic body that is responsible for funding teaching and learning provision, research and other activities in Scotland's colleges and universities. SFC provides funding that colleges can claim for fee waivers.

2.2 Fee waiver: Some students will be able to access a fee waiver, which means they will not have to pay their own course fees. Eligibility for a fee waiver will be assessed at the start of the course, and the student may be required to produce evidence to support their application for fee waiver.

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3. Purpose

3.1 This policy sets out a robust and transparent framework for awarding Further Education course fee waivers at the College.

3.2 The policy will create an equality of experience for students across the partnership, whilst allowing individual colleges the flexibility to respond to local needs.

3.3 **SFC Funded Fee Waivers**

The core of this policy is based on the SFC College Fee Waiver Policy and any associated annexes and appendices. The current SFC College Fee Waiver Policy can be accessed here. The majority of fee waivers will be approved by the college and funded by SFC.

3.4 **Discretionary Fee Waivers**

Students attending the University of the Highlands and Islands will have a parity of experience through the use of SFC Fee Waivers. Under exceptional circumstances and subject to individual budgets, colleges have the power to award discretionary fee waivers.

3.4.1 Categories of Discretionary Fee Waivers include but are not limited to:

- Staff development, where a course is an essential part of an approved staff development plan
- Where the college stipulates compulsory completion of an additional qualification as part of the main course.
- Exceptional requirements, where College Senior Management identify a significant local benefit to use of Discretionary Fee Waivers

3.4.2 Colleges should endeavour to create parity of experiences for students across the region through their use of discretionary fee waivers.

Principal and Chief Executive: Mrs Laura Burden
Shetland UHI (known as UHI Shetland)
Scottish Charity No. SC050701

3.4.3 Due consideration should be given to the impact of discretionary fee waiver usage on other colleges in the University of the Highlands and Islands partnership.

3.5 SVQs

3.5.1 Students undertaking a part-time SVQ as a condition of their employment will not be awarded a fee waiver. In these circumstances, the employer is normally expected to meet the cost of the fees.

3.5.2 Students undertaking a SVQ where it is not a condition of their employment may be eligible for a fee waiver depending on the course and their personal circumstances.

3.5.3 For students undertaking a part-time SVQ regardless of whether it is a condition of employment, their eligibility for fee waivers on additional courses will be assessed according to the current SFC Fee Waiver Policy, associated annexes and appendices.

4. Scope

4.1 This Policy applies to all applicants for further education courses (full-time and part-time), except for the courses set out in Section 5 below.

4.2 Applicants for higher education courses should refer to the Higher Education Fees Policy. Higher education courses are normally Level 7 and above on the SCQF Framework.

5. Exceptions

5.1 Courses outwith the scope of this policy are:

- Any non-credit bearing leisure courses, designed for hobby or personal interest
- All commercial courses, designed and delivered for a particular business/industry

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Shetland UHI (known as UHI Shetland)
Scottish Charity No. SC050701

5.2 Please refer to the accompanying Fee Waiver Procedures for further information and an eligibility flowchart.

6. Notification

6.1 Staff engaging with Fee Waivers should be familiar with this policy and all relevant SFC policies.

6.2 Annual changes to SFC policies will be communicated to staff by line managers and hyperlinks in the policy updated to reflect the most recent guidance.

6.3 Any changes in SFC policy or national legislation will be reflected in this policy.

6.4 The policy will be publicly available on the College's website, along with other current policies.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

7.1 The College's designated senior member of staff holds overall responsibility for the implementation of this policy and the management of Fee Waivers, including the approval of Discretionary Fee Waivers.

7.2 Staff administering Fee Waivers are responsible for ensuring up-to-date SFC guidance is followed.

7.3 The awarding of Discretionary Fee Waivers will be recorded and reported annually to the Finance Directors Practitioner Group.

8. Legislative Framework

- Further and Higher Education (Scotland) Act 2005
- Equality Act 2010

9. Related Policies, Procedures, Guidelines, and Other Resources

9.1 This policy should be read in conjunction with SFC Fee Waiver policies and guidance. The up-to date information can be accessed here.

9.2 Further Education Fee Waiver Procedures 2026-27

9.3 Further Education Fee Waiver Application

9.4 QF055 Further Education Discretionary Fee Waiver Application (Paper Form)

9.5 UHI Further Education Student Funding Support Policy

9.6 UHI Higher Education Fees Policy

9.7 UHI Further Education Fees Policy (Forthcoming)

10. Version Control and Change History

Version	Date	Approved by	Amendment(s)	Author
0	01/05/18	Partnership Council	New single policy	Fee Waiver Policy Ownership Group
1	01/03/21	Partnership Council	Various formatting and grammatical changes through policy; 2.1: Clarity added around source of funding; 2.2: New definition added; 3.3: 'approved by college added'; 3.4: ' for the college to pay the course fees' added; 3.4.1: changes to three bullet points for clarity, including removal of 'significant' and addition of '(being cognisant of 3.4.3)' in third bullet point; 3.5: New section added bringing SVQs into scope of policy; 5.1: SVQs removed from exceptions, and additional information added	Fee Waiver Policy Ownership Group

Principal and Chief Executive: Mrs Laura Burden
Shetland UHI (known as UHI Shetland)
Scottish Charity No. SC050701

SP003
26/10/2026

			to other exceptions; 7.3: section removed. 9.4 and 9.5: Removed Access and Inclusion Strategy and added HE Fees Policy and FE Fees Policy various formatting and grammatical changes through policy; 2.1: Clarity added around source of funding; 2.2: New definition added; 3.3: 'approved by college added'; 3.4: ' for the college to pay the course fees' added; 3.4.1: changes to three bullet points for clarity, including removal of 'significant' and addition of '(being cognisant of 3.4.3)' in third bullet point; 3.5: New section added bringing SVQs into scope of policy; 5.1: SVQs removed from exceptions, and additional information added to other exceptions; 7.3: section removed. 9.4 and 9.5: Removed Access and Inclusion Strategy and added HE Fees Policy and FE Fees Policy	
2	09/06/25	Partnership Council	Policy Reviewed and updated with relevant information from SFC. Change relating to asylum seeker eligibility.	Planning and Performance Team
3	27/10/26	UHI Shetland, Academic Board	Policy Reviewed and updated with relevant information from SFC Minor wording updated: Section 1; 2.2; 3.1; 3.5.2; 6.2; 7.3.	Fee Waiver Policy Ownership Group

Further Education Fee Waiver Procedures 2026-27

The University of the Highlands and Islands operate a mutual set of Further Education Fee Waiver procedures across the partnership. These procedures are based on the Scottish Funding Council College Fee Waiver Policy for Academic Year 2026–27. The procedures and key definitions are set out below.

Fee: This is the cost of the course/module for which the student has applied. All further education courses have a fee attached to them.

Fee Waiver: Some students will be able to access a fee waiver, which means they will not have to pay their own fees. Eligibility for a fee waiver will be assessed at the start of the course, and the student may be required to produce evidence to support their application.

Fee Status: Fee status is the category a student falls into based upon their personal information. This will be one of: Scottish Resident (SC), Rest of UK (RUK) or International (INT).

1. Applicants for courses will provide information on the application form that will be used to determine their fee status.
2. When students receive their offer letter, they will be advised what their fee status is based on the information they have provided.
3. If an applicant has any questions regarding the fee, their fee status or eligibility for a fee waiver, they should contact the college to which they are applying.
4. Full time students will complete the online enrolment form as part of the induction process. Students are asked ‘How will your course fees be paid?’ and select their response from a dropdown menu.
5. Part-time students will be required to complete the FE Part-Time Fee Waiver Funding Application Form online through their Student Hub and upload any necessary supporting evidence (Appendix 1). Students applying for a fee waiver based on receipt of a qualifying benefit will be required to provide evidence in

Principal and Chief Executive: Mrs Laura Burden
Shetland UHI (known as UHI Shetland)
Scottish Charity No. SC050701

SP003
26/10/2026

support of their application. Supporting evidence must demonstrate eligibility under the current Scottish Funding Council College Fee Waiver Policy, including receipt of any qualifying benefits where applicable.

6. Students enrolled in multi-year courses will be expected to provide supporting evidence each year to accompany their fee waiver application.
7. Students who are self-financing their studies will be contacted by the college in order to arrange payment for their fees.
8. Some courses or modules may be eligible for discretionary fee waivers applied by the college. Discretionary fee waivers should be applied in accordance with UHI procedures and the Scottish Funding Council College Fee Waiver Policy, where applicable.

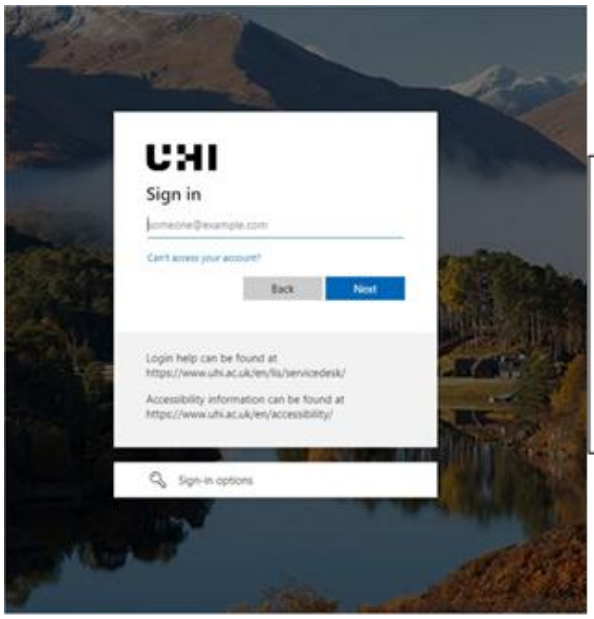
Appendix 1

Further Education Fee Waiver Application – Student Access Guide

1. **Getting ready**: Please make sure that you have relevant proof of benefits available. This will have to be uploaded to your FE Part Time Fee Waiver - Student Funding Application form. Unless this confirmation is uploaded, your application for funding will be rejected.
2. Go to Log in via www.studentjourney.uhi.ac.uk/urd/sits.urd/run/siw_lgn

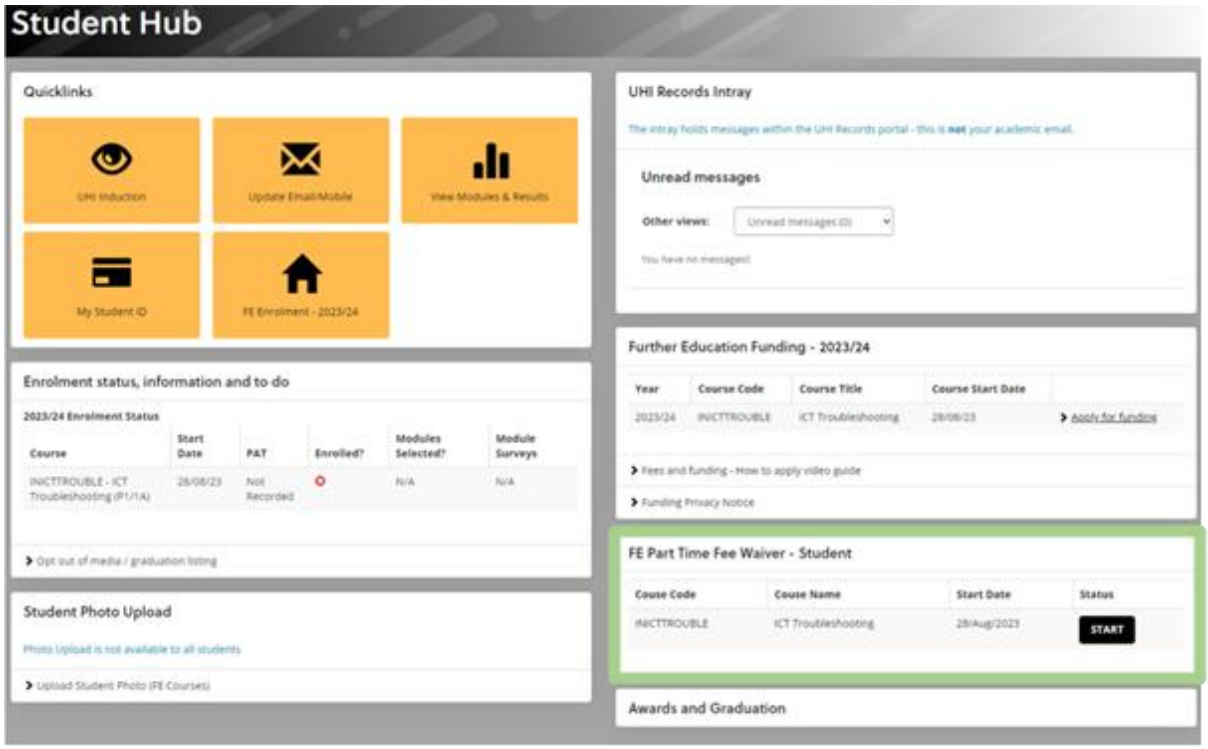


3. Select Students & Staff Login
4. Sign in



If signing in from home, you may be asked to set the multifactor authentication, where the verification text message or code is sent to the MFA app.
If you need assistance to set this up, please contact UHI Service Desk https://www.uhi.ac.uk/en/lis/servicedesk/

5. Select **FE Part Time Fee Waiver – Student**, on the bottom right hand side corner of funding page.



If you need assistance, please contact Student Support: support.shetland@uhi.ac.uk