

# Waterford Academy Of Education

## Fees: Clarity, Support, Payment and Refunds Policy

**This policy follows the guidelines provided by IHEQN.**

### 1. Clarity Regarding Total Costs

Unpredictable fee increases can be a source of difficulty for international students who have to calculate their budgets for several years of study. Accordingly institutions seeking to attract international students provide advance information on fee packages. In particular on application students are:

- ✓ provided with detailed fee information including all compulsory payments in addition to tuition fees. Likely costs of books and course materials, costs of production of dissertations and theses etc. are also included,
- ✓ informed of the current fee for all years of the programme,
- ✓ informed of the WAE policy on fee increases and repeat fees,
- ✓ provided with realistic cost of living information, which can be given as a range of likely costs for accommodation, travel, food, personal expenses etc,
- ✓ made aware on a request in writing by the students before leaving their country of origin of all existing scholarship and funding opportunities available to them from the HEI.

### 2. Student Financial Support

Despite the study visa requirement to show that they have sufficient funds to cover their studies, international students can mismanage their money or their sponsorship can dry up. In such cases WAE will endeavour to assist the student by:-

Advising on loans  
Permitting phased payments

In crisis situations WAE operates a hardship fund.

### 3. Payment of tuition Fees

International students are informed in advance of arrival that in accordance with visa requirements they:

- ✓ may be required to pay 100% of their annual course fee before departure from their country of origin (or prior to application for their visa) when commencing their first programme in Ireland.
- ✓ may be required by the Institute or University to which they transfer, to pay tuition fees annually in advance of continuing their study in a programme. Payment due dates will be clearly identified on the student invoice,
- ✓ may not be able to enrol again, review results, graduate or renew their student visa in the event that payment has not been made in full by the due date specified,
- ✓ will only be granted extensions of time to pay tuition fees in exceptional circumstances for example, evidence of illness or family hardship preventing fee payment during the specified period

### 4. Refund of Course Fees

#### 4.1 Full and Partial Fee Refunds

These will be given given:-

- ✓ where the applicant has been refused a visa to study in Ireland and, in cases where it has been decided to appeal the visa refusal, where an appeal against the decision has failed, a full refund of tuition fees should be given on submission of all original documents and evidence of the refusal of visa.
- ✓ in the event that an offer of a place is withdrawn or WAE is unable to provide the programme, all tuition fees paid should be fully refunded.
- ✓ where an offer was made on the basis of incorrect or incomplete information being supplied by the applicant or student WAE reserves the right to retain up to 50% per cent of the tuition fee as well as any cost incurred in recruiting the student.
- ✓ when a notice of withdrawal due to exceptional circumstances may be accepted as grounds for either a full or partial refund of fees, subject to the provision of acceptable documentary evidence in support of the application for a refund. Examples of exceptional circumstances may include:
  - Inability of an applicant to obtain a student visa.
  - Refusal of entry by Irish immigration authorities at the point of entry into Ireland, despite the student having a valid visa.
  - Recent certified serious illness or disability.
  - Death of the student or a close family member (parent, sibling, spouse or child; this would not normally include a grandparent).

- Collapse of promised financial support or sponsorship of the student notified before commencement of the course.
- ✓ Where a student, having accepted an offer of a course place and not having travelled to Ireland, gives a **minimum of four weeks** written notice of an inability to undertake the course, all tuition fees paid are refundable, provided that the student provides evidence of the cancellation or expiration of his or her study visa to Ireland. The notice period is measured as four weeks before the notified commencement date of the course. WAE will deduct 20% of the tuition fee to cover marketing, recruitment and administration costs.
- ✓ Refunds are only paid when evidence is provided by the student that he/she has returned to his/her home country and the student has provided evidence of the cancellation or expiration of his or her study visa to Ireland.

#### 4.2 Conditions Determining Zero Refunds

- ✓ A student, who withdraws from a course for whatever reason after six teaching weeks, will not be eligible for a refund.
- ✓ A student whose visa is withdrawn subsequent to the granting of a visa will not be eligible for a refund unless there are extenuating circumstances.
- ✓ Where an offer of a course place was made on the basis of documents which subsequently proved to be fraudulent or misleading WAE reserves the right to retain the full fee.
- ✓ A student whose entitlement to attend a programme is terminated due to academic misconduct or antisocial behaviour within WAE, will not be eligible for a refund.
- ✓ A student unable to continue or complete his/her studies because of a breach of government regulations governing his/her student status in Ireland will not be eligible for a refund.
- ✓ A student, who is unable to continue or complete his/her studies because of conviction for a criminal offence in the jurisdiction of the Republic of Ireland, will not be eligible for a refund.

#### 4.3 Payment Mechanisms for Fee Refunds to Students

- ✓ WAE will pay any refund within four weeks of receiving a valid written claim from the student.
- ✓ Refunds are only paid when evidence is provided by the student of the cancellation or expiration of his or her study visa to Ireland.
- ✓ Refunds are denominated in the same currency as that in which the fees were originally invoiced. Payment is made to a designated bank account in the student's home country, except in exceptional circumstances. Refunded

- fees are ideally transferred electronically through the international banking system to avoid delay.
- ✓ If the student was on a scholarship from their own country, refunds will normally be made to the scholarship agency.

#### **4.4 Appeals Process Pertaining to Fee Refunds/ Extensions**

If the student believes that WAE has not honoured its stated fees refunds policy or if the student feels that not all of the relevant information has been taken into account in the decision, he / she should lodge an appeal in writing with the Directors of WAE.

WAE will refer the appeal to a tribunal comprising one WAE representative, one student's representative and one external member from WIT Finance Office, ICOS or IBEC.