



Refunds and Compensation Policy

2025/26

Policy review area	Learners
Lead manager	Head of Operations
Approval level	Senior Management Team
Start date	January 2026
Review cycle	1 year
Next review	January 2027

1. Introduction

This policy outlines the approach and procedures of Acquire Learning College (ALC), regarding the provision of refunds and financial compensation to undergraduate students. It ensures that refunds and compensation are handled fairly, consistently, and transparently, in accordance with relevant legal and regulatory frameworks.

The policy is grounded in the principles of consumer protection law, in line with the Competitions & Markets Authority (CMA) guidance, and the Office for Students (OfS) regulatory framework and in alignment with that of the College's university partner, Leeds Trinity University. It forms part of the contractual relationship with enrolled students and ensures that financial redress is available if service disruption, institutional changes, or withdrawal from study occurs.

The College has a Student Protection Plan (SPP) and a Consumer Protection Plan (CPP) that collectively explain how they safeguards students' and wider stakeholders' interests in the event of material changes, such as major course alterations, suspensions, or closures. The Student Protection Plan outlines the steps to protect students interests and ensure studies continue if such changes occur. 'Teaching out' will always be the first choice of protection measure to take.

Alongside the Student Protection Plan, this policy outlines the circumstances and processes that govern refunds and compensation for students of Leeds Trinity University. The policy aims to protect students' interests ensuring they are treated fairly and has been developed in line with the:

- [Universities UK briefing](#) on compensation and refund policies published in April 2018
- [OIA's Putting Things Right](#) published in February 2019

Refunds and compensation will be considered where there is a failure to deliver what was promised in terms of educational quality, resources, or services. Each claim will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, considering the impact on the student.

2. Scope

This policy applies to all undergraduate students at the College and covers withdrawal (student-initiated or institutional), course cancellation or major restructuring, disruption due to academic delivery failure, delayed access to services essential for learning and student-initiated claims for refund or compensation

It applies to both UK and international students (where applicable) and to tuition fees, additional costs, and financial losses resulting from academic disruption.

3. Refund Eligibility Criteria

Students may be eligible for a partial or full refund in the following withdrawal during the 14-day cooling-off period following enrolment, approved withdrawal prior to the start of term, termination of a course by the College before or during delivery, failure by the College to deliver a key service or teaching component, and changes to the course that materially affects the student's experience, where the student opts not to continue.

Refunds will not normally be granted for voluntary withdrawal mid-term unless due to exceptional circumstances (e.g. medical, bereavement, visa denial). Refunds will be calculated proportionally based on the duration of study and tuition delivered.

4. Compensation Eligibility Criteria

Compensation may be awarded where the student has experienced demonstrable loss, inconvenience, or additional cost resulting from unplanned closure of a programme or campus, delays in graduation or progression due to service failure. inadequate delivery of promised teaching or supervision, inability to access resources necessary to complete a course and transferring to an alternative provider that imposes additional costs.

Each case is assessed on its individual merits, taking into account the student's circumstances, incurred losses, and level of disruption. Compensation may include travel or relocation costs, additional tuition expenses, cost earnings or hardship support vouchers, partial fee waivers, or goodwill payments.

5. Refund and Compensation Process

Students should submit a refund or compensation request by contacting the student services team, submitting a formal claim form with supporting evidence or a waiting internal review (usually within 21 working days). If a claim is upheld, refunds are issued via original payment methods or bank transfer with compensation being awarded based on a written outcome notice.

Students not satisfied with the decision may appeal through the complaints procedure or refer the case to the appropriate awarding body. If a satisfactory resolve cannot be reached, the appeal may be further considered by the Office of the Independent Adjudicator (OIA).

6. Communication and Awareness

Students are informed of this policy through pre-enrolment documentation, offer letters and contracts, enrolment portals and student handbooks and orientation and induction events. The College ensures refund and compensation terms are written in plain English, easily accessible, and reviewed for fairness under CMA and OfS Condition C5 expectations.

7. Student Protection and Financial Planning

The College's Student Protection Plan (Condition C3) ensures it maintains financial reserves to meet refund/compensation obligations, has clear procedures in place to activate redress mechanisms, conducts annual audits of financial risk and protection capability and updates students on relevant changes to their financial rights.

8. Levels of Refunds and Compensation

The Office for Students (OfS) does not prescribe fixed levels or monetary values for refunds and compensation. Instead, it requires that the College has credible, fair, and proportionate

arrangements in place to assess and deliver refunds and compensation based on individual circumstances and level of disruption.

Key Expectations from the OfS:

1. Proportionality

Refunds and compensation must be proportionate to the disruption or loss experienced by the student. This means the level of compensation should reflect the extent and duration of the disruption (e.g. cancelled modules, loss of teaching time), the financial or academic impact on the student, whether the disruption affected progression, graduation, or qualification outcomes and whether the student incurred direct costs (e.g. travel, relocation, living costs, extra childcare, additional tuition elsewhere).

2. Credibility and Transparency

Under Condition C3 (Student Protection Measures), the OfS requires the College to maintain a Student Protection Plan (SPP) that includes clear criteria for when refunds or compensation may be issued, accessible processes for students to claim redress and a demonstration of the provider's financial ability to pay compensation if needed (e.g. through financial reserves or insurance).

3. Case-by-Case Assessment

There is no fixed tariff or table of payments. The College will assess each case on its individual merit, taking into account evidence submitted by the student (e.g. receipts, academic impacts), severity of the disruption and whether a remedy or alternative provision was offered and accepted.

Examples of What May Be Compensated

Situation	Refund	Compensation
Withdrawal within 14-day cooling-off period	Full refund	N/A
Provider cancels course before it starts	Full refund	May include relocation or inconvenience costs
Course closure mid-year with no equivalent provision	Partial refund	Relocation costs, additional tuition costs, hardship fund
Long-term teaching disruption (e.g. strike with no mitigation)	Partial refund	Compensation for loss of academic experience
Delay in graduation due to service failure	N/A	Compensation for lost earnings or employment opportunity

Situation	Refund	Compensation
Poor quality provision not meeting advertised standard	Possible partial refund	Depends on severity and student's loss

9. Monitoring and Review

This policy is reviewed annually by the college's Academic Board and the Board of Governors, considering student feedback and complaints, legal or regulatory changes, financial risk management reports and case reviews and appeals data.

The College's aim is to continuously improve how it applies refunds and compensation with consistency, clarity, and compassion.

Hall, R. (2022) Universities in England and Wales double or triple student hardship funds Guardian Newspaper [Online] 20.10.2022

Donnelly, A. (2001) Evaluating the impact of higher education funding aimed to address student hardship: Survey findings. Sheffield Hallam University