

# Subcontracting Fees and Charges Policy


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**Approved by:**

Board of Corporation

**Signed by the Chair of the Board**



**Signed by the CEO**



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West London's College

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## **Introduction**

The purpose of this document is to describe and communicate the College's policy in relation to the engagement and management of subcontractors and subcontracted provision.

## **Scope**

This policy applies to all subcontractor partner provision secured by the College.

The College recognises that subcontracted provision can play an important role in providing a broad and flexible mix of provision for learners, employers and the wider community. Subcontractors can benefit the College by accessing learners in different settings and communities who may not normally attend provision at a large FE College. They can also provide clear progression routes into College provision and provide learners with a stepping stone qualification.

The College has the knowledge, skills and experience to manage subcontracting effectively, including procurement, contract, finance, audit and quality matters. Any potential conflicts of interest within the team are identified through an annual declaration.

The College will engage with a limited number of subcontractors where there is a clear strategic reason to do so. The highest weighted score for approving a new subcontractor is their strategic fit and the added value they can bring to the College's goals.

## **Overarching Principle**

The College will use its supply chains to optimise the impact and effectiveness of service delivery to the end user. The college will therefore ensure that:

- Supply chain management activities comply with the principles of best practice in the skills sector. In particular they will be guided by the principles given in the LSIS publication "Supply Chain Management - a good practice guide for the post-16 skills sector" (Nov 2012 and subsequent iterations)
- The college will at all times undertake fair and transparent procurement activities, conducting robust due diligence procedures on potential subcontractors to ensure compliance with the Common Accord at all levels and to ensure the highest quality of learning delivery is made available, demonstrating value for money and a positive impact on learner lives.
- The funding that is retained by the college will be related to the costs of the services provided. These services, and the levels of funding being retained for them, will be clearly documented and agreed by all parties in a formal contract. The rates of such retained funding will be commercially viable for both sides and will be negotiated and agreed in a fair and transparent manner. They will be proportionate to the actual services being provided.
- Where disputes between supply chain partners cannot be resolved through mutually agreed internal resolution procedures, the college will submit to independent outside arbitration or mediation and abide by its findings. Contract documents will require both parties to agree that the achievements of supply chains are attained through adherence to both the letter and spirit of contracts or partnerships. Signatories therefore commit that all discussions, communications, negotiations and actions undertaken to build, maintain and develop supply chains will be conducted in good faith in accordance with the Overarching Principle.

- This policy is in line with the Equality and Diversity Policy of Ealing, Hammersmith & West London College.
- The College will not subcontract with extremist organisations or those linked with extremist organisations, with checks included in the due diligence process.

### **Rationale for sub-contracting**

The decision to engage subcontractors to deliver learning programmes on behalf of the College will take account of the following factors:

- The fit with the strategic aims and goals of the College.
- The added value the subcontractor will bring to the College
- Widening participation (attracting learners who would not attend College)
- Enabling the College to capacity build in specialist sectors
- Local, regional and national needs of employers and learners.
- The breadth and mix of provision required to meet employer /learner needs.
- The current and planned capacity of the College to deliver its strategic aims
- The quality of provision from subcontractors and their ability to achieve outstanding success
- Past performance of subcontractors and a track record of high success
- The sound financial health of subcontractors.
- Any Government and funding agency targets, priorities and regulations.

### **Quality Assurance**

Subcontracted activity is a fundamental part of the College's provision. The quality of the provision will be monitored and managed through the existing College Quality Assurance processes and procedures, as amended in order to fully encompass all subcontracted activity.

This Policy positions subcontracted provision as a core part of College activity to enable continuous improvements in the quality of teaching and learning for both the college and its subcontractor's. This will be achieved through the sharing of effective practice across the supply chain, for example through the Self-Assessment Report process and Quality improvement plan (QIP/SAR)

### **Quality Improvement**

- The College actively supports subcontractors to improve continuously the quality of the teaching and learning they deliver and thereby improve the overall quality of teaching and learning to all Collegelearners.
- The College undertakes observations on all aspects of teaching and learning including information, advice and guidance, progress reviews and assessment.
- The College provides timely and meaningful feedback to both subcontractor and delivery staff and observations will be incorporated into the College moderation and standardisation process, in order that improvement actions impact both internal and subcontractquality.
- The College carries out learner voice surveys to gather feedback from learners, combined employer satisfaction surveys.

- The College supports subcontractors to implement effective policies and procedures relating to teaching and learning including assessment and verification policies and procedures.

### **Publication of information relating to sub-contracting**

In compliance with Education & Skills Funding Agency and other agency funding rules that apply, the College will publish its sub-contracting fees and charges policy and actual end- of-year sub-contracting fees and charges on its website before the start of each academic year (and in the case of actual end of year data, as required by ESFA). This will only relate to 'provision subcontracting' i.e. subcontracted delivery of full programmes or frameworks. It will not include the delivery of a service as part of the delivery of a programme.

The College will ensure all actual and potential subcontractors have sight of this policy and any other relevant documents, such as the Fees and Charges Risk Factor Table. The Fees and Charges Risk Factor Table includes:

- The typical percentage range of fees retained to manage subcontractors, and how this range is calculated.
- The rationale used to determine the level of fee retained through each subcontract is a risk based approach.
- The contributory risk factors that would result in differences in fees charged for, or support provided to, different subcontractors might include:
  - Previous track record
  - Success levels
  - Type of customers to be engaged
  - Type of provision to be undertaken
  - Contract duration
- The risk bands that will be used to allocate college charges. Risk factors are given a score so that each subcontractor is aware of why they are in a particular band, this process will be used to give sub-contractors an incentive to improve and thus reduce the risk band that they fall in. For example, higher risk sub-contractors will be allocated less funding but receive more monitoring and support.
- Details of any successful completion 'bonuses' where sub-contractors are paid some of the money retained, once it is clear that they will fulfil their contract.
- Payment terms between the college and subcontractors - timing of payments in relation to delivering provision and timescale for paying invoices and claims for funding received.
- The support subcontractors will receive in return for the fees charged.

### **Communication**

This policy will be reviewed in each summer term and updated as required. It will be published on the college web site during the July prior to the start of the academic year in which it will be applied. Potential subcontractors will be directed to it as the starting point in any relationship.

## The Fees and Charges Risk Factor Table 2019/20

### **Fees retained and variation in fees charged or support provided to different subcontractors**

- The typical percentage range of fees retained to manage subcontractors is between 15% and 20%.
- The range is calculated based on the level of resource required to manage effectively the individual subcontractor relationship to ensure that the quality of delivery to learners is maintained and that any risk to the College and Education & Skills Funding Agency is mitigated.
- Higher fees are retained where more comprehensive support needs are identified, for example to improve the quality of some or all of a subcontractor's delivery or if the College provides substantial delivery resources (material, staff, premises).

All funding is drawn down against the provision to be delivered. This figure represents the total cost that the College incurs in effectively identifying, selecting and managing all sub-contracted provision. This includes the minimum amount of QA activity that the College would attach to the lowest possible risk sub-contractor.

Further charges to cover additional costs may be added to the base fee to cover the cost to the College of any additional support that the College deems necessary to ensure the quality of teaching and learning and the success rates of any subcontracted provision. Additional cost is determined using a weighted table of risk factors. The table is available to all actual and potential subcontractors. It is designed to ensure that the cost of any additional support provided to a subcontractor is covered through the funding retained. Additional costs will be recalculated and negotiated each year at contract renewal, giving sub-contractors the opportunity to reduce their fees through continuous improvement. This approach will allow the College to focus support where and when it is needed.

All subcontractors are approved by the Senior Leadership Team following the completion of due diligence checks. The scoring criteria for approvals is based on risks outlined in table 1:

**Table 1:**

<b>Risk Consideration</b>	<b>Weighting %</b>
Strategic fit, including previous track record and geographical delivery	45%
Quality assurance, including achievement rates, safeguarding, teaching, learning and assessment	20%
Contractual and legal risks	20%
Financial risks	15%

### **Additional Support for Sub Contractors**

The precise additional support given to each sub-contractor will be negotiated with that sub-contractor, but will be based on a 'risk band' approach and may include:

- Additional site visits
- Additional lesson observation
- Additional tutor support
- More rigorous verification

The risk band will be determined using the scoring in Table 1.

### **Additional charges per learner**

The College may also retain funding to cover the cost of any funded activity that it might undertake on behalf of the sub-contractor such as:

- Awarding Organisation fees and charges
- Hiring of facilities/equipment within/from the College
- Internal Verification

### **Support provided to subcontractors**

- The College provides a Contract Manager to manage the relationship with the subcontractor.
- The College provide as Quality Lead to ensure that the quality of subcontractor's delivery meets its expectations and to support the continuous improvement of the subcontractor's provision.
- The College provides administration support to ensure the timely recording of learner information on the College's ILR.
- The College undertakes a regular and substantial programme of quality assurance checks on the education and training provided by subcontractors, including visits at short or no notice and face-to-face interviews with staff and learners. These checks include whether the learners exist and are eligible, and involve direct observation of initial guidance, assessment and delivery of learning programmes.
- The College ensures that all of the subcontractor's delivery meets the Education & Skills Funding Agency's Funding Rules.
- The College ensures that any Apprenticeship provision delivered by subcontractors meets all of the required standards and specific ESFA funding rules.

### **Payment terms**

- Subcontractors will be paid monthly in arrears.
- Payment will be based on actual delivery evidenced through the College's ILR.
- Payment by BACS will be made within 30 days of the subcontractor submitting a validated invoice to the College