

VET FEE HELP Policy



RESPONSIBLE COMMITTEE:	Finance Committee
CATEGORY:	Student information and services
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RELATED POLICIES AND DOCUMENTS:	VET Provider Handbook VET FEE-HELP Guidelines VET Provider Guidelines Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA) Access and Equity Policy VET FEE HELP Refund Procedure Privacy Policy Student Fee Refunds Policy Complaints Resolution Procedures Fee Concession Guidelines

Introduction

VET FEE-HELP is an income contingent loan scheme for the vocational education and training (VET) sector that is part of the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP). It is an extension of higher education FEE-HELP arrangements.

VET FEE-HELP has been established to assist students who are enrolled in a VET FEE HELP enabled course to pay for all or part of their VET courses of study

As a registered Vocational Education and Training provider, the Institute must meet the requirements of the Australian Quality Training Framework (AQTF). In addition to these expectations, South West Institute of TAFE must comply with the quality and accountability requirements for VET FEE-HELP.

Definitions

DEEWR	Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations
HESA	Higher Education Support Act 2003
FEE-HELP	Higher education fees assistance and loans scheme
VET FEE-HELP	Income contingent loan scheme applicable to eligible courses in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector.
Census date	is the date at which point the student becomes liable for the fees applicable to that unit of study if they are still enrolled. This cannot be before 20% of the VET unit of study has lapsed.

Background

VET FEE-HELP assistance is only available when undertaking a VET course with an approved VET provider at the diploma, advanced diploma, graduate certificate and graduate diploma level.

VET FEE-HELP assistance is paid to the VET Provider on behalf of the student by the Australian Government against outstanding tuition fees for each VET unit of study in which the student is enrolled. Students repay the loan to the Australian Government through the tax system once a person reaches the minimum income threshold level for repayment – refer to www.deewr.gov.au/vetfeehelp for current threshold.

VET Providers

The Institute must meet specific requirements under Schedule 1A of the Higher Education Support Act 2003 to receive approval as a VET Provider before current and future students can access VET FEE-HELP assistance.

VET Provider Handbook, Chapter 2

A list of approved providers is available from www.deewr.gov.au/vetfeehelp

Course eligibility

Diploma, advanced diploma, graduate certificate and graduate diploma level courses are eligible for VET FEE-HELP assistance.

VET FEE-HELP Guidelines 3.5.1

VET Provider Guidelines 2.5.1

VET Provider Handbook, Chapter 4

Student eligibility

To be eligible for VET FEE-HELP assistance, the student must:

- Be enrolled in a VET FEE HELP enabled course at the diploma, advanced diploma, graduate certificate and graduate diploma level.
- meet the citizenship or residency requirements
- have a FEE-HELP balance greater than zero
- be enrolled in a unit before the expiry of the census date
- meet the Tax File Number (TFN) requirements
- have completed, signed and submitted a Request for VET FEE-HELP Assistance to the appropriate South West TAFE Officer before the expiry of the census date.

VET Provider Handbook, Section 5.5 and 5.6

Student Selection Policy (South West TAFE)

VET Unit of Study tuition fees

Under paragraph 28(2)(a) and 28(2)(b) of Schedule 1A of the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA), a VET Provider must give the schedule of tuition fees to the Minister by the publication deadlines for tuition fees, except for tuition fees for units that are offered under restricted access arrangements. These deadlines are :

- 1 April for units with a census date in the same year between 1 July and 31 December and
- 1 October for units with a census date in the following year between 1 January and 30 June.

The Institute must provide the schedule to the Minister by:

- posting the schedule on the Institute's website
- emailing the schedule or a URL link to the schedule on the Institute's website to the email address - vetfeehelp@deewr.gov.au.

Where the Institute submits a link to its website it must maintain a printable record of the published tuition fees that applied at a particular time including enough information to respond to student queries or provide the information to DEEWR upon request.

Sub clause 28(2) of Schedule 1A of HESA

VET Provider Guidelines, Chapter 7.

VET Tuition Assurance

South West TAFE will meet its VET Tuition Fee repayment requirements through its membership of the TAFE Directors Tuition Assurance Schemes. Under the Tuition Assurance Scheme, if South West TAFE ceases to provide the VET course of study of which the unit formed part, and if a student chooses the VET tuition fee repayment option, and not the VET course assurance option in respect of the unit, then within 20 business days after receiving notification of that choice South West TAFE will:

- re-credit the student's FEE-HELP balance for that unit
- notify the VTAS operator, which is TAFE Directors Tuition Assurance Scheme.

The VTAS operator will, within 10 business days of being notified:

- pay the student any up-front VET payments paid for a VET unit of study
- pay the Commonwealth any amounts paid to South West TAFE in discharge of the students VET tuition fee liability for the unit.

Students seeking a tuition fee refund due to withdrawing from the VET Unit of Study for personal or special circumstances should refer to the Institute's [Student Fee Refund Policy](#).

VET Provider Handbook, Section 2.5.10

Student Fee Refund Policy (South West TAFE)

VET FEE-HELP Refund Procedure (South West TAFE)

Statement of VET Tuition Assurance (South West TAFE)

Reporting requirements

The Institute will be required to provide data to DEEWR containing student demographic and enrolment information. Compliance with the reporting requirements is a condition of continued approval as a VET provider under HESA.

The Institute must publish the census date for each unit of study that it provides or proposes to provide by the date ascertained in accordance HESA guidelines. Publication timelines are :

- 1 April for units with a census date in the same year between 1 July and 31 December and
- 1 October for units with a census date in the following year between 1 January and 30 June.

VET Provider Handbook, Section 7.
VET FEE HELP Administration Guidelines Chapter 3
Privacy Policy (South west TAFE)
Student Records Management Procedure (South West TAFE)

Fair treatment

South West Institute of TAFE will treat fairly all of its students (who are or would be entitled to VET FEE-HELP assistance) and all of the persons seeking to enrol with the Institute. It is to be understood that the application of fair treatment does not require that all students are treated the same. To ensure fair, transparent and consistent treatment, the Institute has written and implemented policies and procedures in accordance with relevant Acts, legislation, regulations and industry requirement.

Equal benefits and opportunities

South West Institute of TAFE has in place an open, fair and transparent procedure which is available to all students and gives accountability to staff to make decisions based on merit and to consider each application on a case by case basis. The Institute undertakes to ensure flexibility and unbiased consideration of all applications when dealing with persons applying for courses.

The Institute will not apply an income test when making decisions about which of their students are eligible for VET FEE-HELP assistance.

VET Provider Handbook, section 3.3
VET Provider Guidelines, Chapter 5
Access and Equity Policy (South West TAFE)
Fee Concession Guidelines (South West TAFE)
Student Selection Policy (South West TAFE)

Student grievance and review procedures – academic and non-academic

The Institute has procedures and processes in place to allow students to openly question, discuss and seek a full review regarding outcomes they may not agree with, this is in respect of both academic and non-academic issues.

In accordance with VET Provider Guidelines, the Institute's procedures relating to the grievance process are agreed to and ratified by its governing body.

VET Provider Handbook, section 3.3
VET Provider Guidelines, Chapter 6
Complaints Resolution Procedure (South West TAFE)
Academic Grievance Procedure (South West TAFE)

Customer complaints and feedback process

Complaints of any nature received by South West Institute of TAFE will be treated with discretion and remain confidential. The Institute has processes in place to investigate all issues raised and to respond to the complainant in a professional and timely manner.

All students are made aware of support services available, of their rights and obligations, their right of appeal and of the process for lodging complaints or feedback during their induction briefing post enrolment with the Institute.

VET Provider Handbook, section 3.3
VET Provider Guidelines, Chapter 6
AQTF, Element 2.2
Quality and Continuous Improvement Policy (South West TAFE)

Privacy and personal information

The Institute will at all times comply with the requirements of the Information Privacy Act 2000 (Vic) and the Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth).

A documented procedure has been established to ensure that the Institute, in conducting its business, applies management processes that protect and respect individual information privacy rights.

VET Provider Handbook, section 3.3

Privacy Policy (South West TAFE)

Student Records Management Procedures (South West TAFE)

Access and equity

The Institute is committed to adhering to access and equity principles in the implementation of this policy.