FEE CONCESSION
Guidelines

Introduction
The Institute is responsible for the setting the tuition fees for Government funded courses in accordance with Fee Guidelines issued by the Higher Education and Skills Group from time to time. The Institute is required to allow concessions on standard hourly tuition fees in accordance with these Guidelines based on 20% of the published standard hourly fee.


The Institute also has an obligation to publish on our website all fees associated with government funded training courses.

Scope
This procedure is applicable to students enrolling in Certificate I to Certificate IV government funded courses at South West TAFE.

Definitions
  The Training Service Delivery Agreement between South West Institute of TAFE and the Department of Education and Training
- Concession fees:
  A reduction in tuition fees to an amount calculated on the basis of 20% of the published Skills First standard hourly fee.
- Fee exemption:
  Where the individual or course has no course fees imposed.
- Financial hardship:
  Being able to demonstrate that the imposing of full fees will cause financial difficulties that will adversely impact on the student’s ability to achieve positive educational outcomes.

Delegated authority
The Institute Board has delegated authority to consider and provide concession fees where cases of financial hardship can be demonstrated. Institute Board has nominated the Institute’s Manager Client Services to oversee the fee concession process.

Procedure to claim concession fees
- As part of the pre-enrolling information package, all potential students are provided with a Student Handbook that contains information on the Institute’s fee and charges. This information is also available on the Institute’s website at www.swtafe.vic.edu.au. The website provides the potential student with all the relevant information including:
  - the hourly rates to be charged and a breakdown of how these are charged
  - acceptable concessions categories
fee payment options
what happens when you withdraw from a course
how to apply for special consideration of having your fees reduced

- Concession tuition fees are available to students eligible for a government funded place within a course at AQF level IV or below, and who can provide the required evidence prior to the course commencement date. If the student is enrolling in a Diploma or above AQF level course, concession rates cannot be applied except in specific circumstances.

- Concession General Service Fees are available to students eligible for a government funded place within all course levels.

- A student who has been issued with a current Health Care Card, Pensioner Concession Card or Veterans Gold Card, is eligible to claim concession fees. Being listed as a dependant on their parent’s or partner’s Concession Card also makes them eligible for concession fees. The valid Concession Card must be sighted and a copy retained of the entitlement prior to commencement in training. In some instances an exception may allow the application of a valid concession provided within 10 days of enrolment.

- The Concession Card must cover the enrolment date for the concession rate to be applied to the student’s fees.

- Where a student does not have a valid Concession Card, but believes they have a case for financial hardship, the student is required to write to the Manager Client Services outlining their claim. Alternatively, the Education Pathways team can make a recommendation to the Manager, Client Services for consideration of a Financial Hardship Scholarship to be issued. (refer to section: Financial Hardship Scholarships).

Applying Concession Fees without evidence to VTG eligible individuals:
The Government has nominated that in the following circumstances, Concession Fees are to be applied to Skills First eligible individuals, even if they do not have evidence of concession.

- Indigenous Completions Initiative – for enrolments in a course at any level, the concession fee must be applied to individuals who self-identify as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander decent once deemed eligible for Skills First funding.

Financial Hardship Scholarships

The intent of the Scholarship Fund is to support those students who wish to access TAFE training but who are unable to do so due to the impact of higher fees across some programs. The scholarship is particularly focussed on potential full time students who are likely to have limited options in alternative training and / or employment and where the inability to pay higher fees may see them not being able to engage in meaningful education, training and / or future employment. The scholarship will cover course fees only and will effectively reduce the course fees to the equivalent concession rate fee.

- Applicants need to be able to demonstrate financial hardship
- Applicants should be able to articulate their commitment to the course and area of study
- Australian citizen or permanent resident
Consideration for a Financial Hardship Scholarship can only be made through the Education Pathways Team who ascertains a student’s ability to pay the fees through alternative sources or processes.

- The EPO team will provide the Manager – Client Services with a background case of potential candidates.
- The Manager – Client Services will consider these and if viable, will make a recommendation to the Institute Executive Team
- Institute Executive Team to consider at each weekly IET meeting

Where a student believes they have a case for financial hardship, but do not meet the requirements of the Scholarship fund or the Fund is exhausted, they may write to the Executive Manager Education and Teaching Support outlining their claim and seeking a reduction in fees.

- The Executive Manager Education and Teaching Support will assess the claim and provide written advice to the student within 10 business days.
- Claims will be assessed on a case by case basis.
- Decisions will be based on the following criteria:
  - Impact on the student’s ability to participate in the course and achieve a positive educational outcome.
  - Actual evidence provided to support the claim (i.e. doctor’s certificate, financial information)
  - Information that indicates that the individual is borderline in qualifying for a Centrelink benefit.
- When making an assessment, additional evidence of financial hardship to support the individual’s claim may be requested. This may result in the individual being referred to Centrelink for an official eligibility assessment.

Access and equity

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