

Student Review Requirements & Re-Crediting a VET FEE-HELP Balance

Definitions

The Act refers to the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*

Student: Refers to students, who are Australian citizens or permanent humanitarian visa holders who will be resident in Australia for the duration of their VET Units of study, and who access VET FEE-HELP for payment of their tuition fees in respect of the VET unit of study in which they are enrolled.

Census Date: A published date, set by the provider, no earlier than 20% of the way through a VET Unit of Study.

Tuition Fees: Fees paid for a VET Unit of Study that is approved for VET FEE-HELP and applies to students who are, or would be entitled to VET FEE-HELP assistance under clause 43 of Schedule 1A of the Act.

Unit or VET Unit of Study: A VET unit of study approved for VET FEE-HELP that a student may undertake with the College for which the student may access VET FEE-HELP assistance to pay for all or part of their tuition fees.

DEEWR: The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

Incurring a VET FEE-HELP Debt

A student who is, or would be, eligible for VET FEE-HELP and has requested VET FEE-HELP Assistance, who withdraws from a Unit on or before the census date will not incur a VET FEE-HELP debt for the tuition fees for that Unit. There are no cancellation fees for courses which are covered under VET FEE-HELP.

Students who have requested VET FEE-HELP Assistance who remain enrolled after the published census date will incur a VET FEE-HELP debt however will not incur a cancellation fee. A student who withdraws from a Unit after the published census date for that Unit will incur a VET FEE-HELP debt for that Unit.

Re-crediting a VET FEE-HELP Balance

Students who withdraw from a Unit after the published census date, or fail to complete a Unit, may apply to have their VET FEE-HELP balance re-credited with respect to the Unit if they believe **special circumstances** apply in accordance with the following procedures.

Special Circumstances

If a student withdraws from a Unit after the published census date for that Unit, or has been unable to successfully complete a Unit and believes this was due to special circumstances, the student may apply to have their VET FEE-HELP balance re-credited for the affected unit/s.

The College will re-credit the student's VET FEE-HELP Balance if it is satisfied that Special Circumstances apply where:

- these circumstances are beyond their control, and
- these circumstances did not make their full impact on the student until on, or after the census date; and
- these circumstances were such that it was impracticable for the student to complete the requirements for the Unit.

For circumstances to be beyond a student's control, the situation should be that which a reasonable person would consider is not due to the student's action or inaction, either direct or indirect, and for which the student is not responsible. The situation must be unusual, uncommon or abnormal to be considered special circumstances.

Special circumstances do not include:

- lack of knowledge or understanding of requirements for VET FEE-HELP assistance; or
- a student's incapacity to repay a VET FEE-HELP debt (repayments are income contingent and the student can apply to the Australian Taxation Office for a deferral of a compulsory repayment in certain circumstances).

Re-credit of a Student's VET FEE-HELP balance - The process

Each application for re-credit of a student's VET FEE-HELP balance will be considered on its merits together with all supporting documentation substantiating the special circumstances claim.

The National Student Services Manager, is the designated VET FEE-HELP officer of the College. The above officer is responsible for the assessment of a student's request for a re-credit of their VET FEE-HELP balance due to special circumstances and for the initial decision regarding the request.

1. A student must apply in writing to the National Student Services Manager via the Special Circumstances Application Form and supply appropriate supportive documentation within 12 months of the withdrawal date, or if the student has not withdrawn, within 12 months of the specified completion date of the Unit. The College has the discretion to waive this requirement if it is satisfied that it was not possible for the application to be made within the 12 month period. Relevant supporting documentation will be required to substantiate the claim.
2. The application for re-crediting a VET FEE-HELP balance must include details of the:
 - Unit(s) for which a student is seeking to have a VET FEE-HELP balance re-credited; and
 - special circumstances as referred to above, including supporting documentation.
3. The College will consider each application within 10 working days of receipt of the application. It will consider each request to re-credit a VET FEE-HELP balance in accordance with the requirements of Schedule 1A of the Act. Applicants will be notified in writing of the decision within 20 working days.

Review of Decision

1. Where the College makes a decision NOT to re-credit a student's VET FEE-HELP balance, that decision may be subject to review.
2. If a student is not satisfied with the decision made by the College the student may apply, within 28 days of the receipt of the original decision, for a review of the decision. The application for review must:
 - be made within 28 days of receipt of the original decision
 - include the date of the original decision
 - state fully the reasons for applying for the review
 - include any additional relevant evidence
3. Applications should be made in writing to the Director, Student Services as the designated Review Officer of any decisions relating to a request for re-crediting of a VET FEE-HELP balance.

Note: The Review Officer is senior to the designated VET FEE-HELP officer responsible for the original decision and was not involved in making the original decision to be reviewed.
4. The Review Officer will:
 - acknowledge receipt of the application for review of a decision in writing within 10 working days; and

- inform the student that if the Review Officer has not advised them of a decision within 45 days of receipt of the application for review, it is taken that the Review Officer has confirmed the original decision.
5. The Review Officer will then:
- review the information from the original decision and then assess any new evidence provided by the student
 - provide written notice to the student of the decision, setting out the reasons for the decision
 - inform the student of their right to apply to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal if they disagree with the Review Decision, and timelines involved (see below).

Reconsideration by the Administration Appeals Tribunal

At the time of the original decision, and at the time of the subsequent Review Decision, the student will be notified of their review rights and responsibilities. The relevant officer will inform a student in writing of their right to appeal to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) if they are not satisfied with the outcome and the contact details of the closest AAT office and the approximate costs of lodging an appeal. The Application must be lodged at the AAT within 28 days of receiving written notice of the Review Decision. This time limitation can be extended in limited circumstances by order of the AAT.

For your local AAT Office and application fees contact:

<http://www.aat.gov.au/ContactUs/PrincipalRegistry.htm>

Full details of the application process and fees payable are available on the AAT Registry's website: www.aat.gov.au. Applications cannot proceed until the fee has been paid or waived. Applications for fee waiver must be made to the AAT. Refer to the AAT website for more details.

The Secretary of DEEWR, or the Secretary's delegate, will be the respondent for cases that are brought before the AAT. Upon DEEWR's receipt of a notification from the AAT, DEEWR will notify the College that an appeal has been lodged. Upon receipt of this notification from DEEWR, the Review Officer will provide DEEWR with copies of all the documents that are relevant to the appeal within ten (10) business days.

Publication

The Special Circumstances Policy is published on the College website to ensure students have up to date and accurate information publicly available to them:

<http://www.endeavour.edu.au/policies-and-procedures>

For further information please consult your VET FEE-Help Information Booklet provided on enrolment and/or [StudyAssist](http://studyassist.gov.au/sites/StudyAssist/) website available at <http://studyassist.gov.au/sites/StudyAssist/>