

## **VET FEE-HELP: Tuition Re-crediting & Student Review Policy**

### **Purpose**

VET FEE-HELP is an income contingent loan scheme for the vocational educational and training sector that is an extension of the higher education FEE-HELP arrangements. This policy outlines the process by which eligible Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd students can receive a re-credit of their FEE-HELP balance and/or a re-credit of tuition fees paid.

### **Scope**

VET FEE-HELP applies to the following AQF levels of study: VET accredited Diploma, Advanced Diploma, Graduate Certificate, and Graduate Diploma courses. To be an eligible course in which students can access VET FEE-HELP assistance, the course must also meet the requirements of sub-clause 45 (1) of HESA. VET FEE-HELP assists eligible students to pay for part or all of their VET tuition fees while studying an eligible course at Health Skills Australia.

### **Definitions**

#### **Tuition fees**

The tuition fee is the fee that Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd charges students for each VET unit of study. VET FEE-HELP can only be used to pay for tuition fees. There are no minimum or maximum tuition fee requirements for VET FEE-HELP.

#### **Census date**

In accordance with paragraph 67(3) of Schedule 1A of the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (the Act) and paragraph 3.10.1 of the VET Administration Guidelines, the census date for each VET unit of study will be published on :

- 1 April for units of study with a census date in the same year between 1 July and 31 December; and
- 1 October for units of study with a census date in the subsequent year between 1 January and 30 June of that year.

#### **VET course of study**

A VET course, at diploma, advanced diploma, graduate certificate and graduate diploma level To be an eligible course in which students can access VET FEE-HELP assistance the course must also meet the VET credit arrangements set out in the VET FEE-HELP Guidelines (the Act Schedule 1A cl45(1))

#### **VET unit of study**

A VET unit of study is a unit of study that a student may undertake with Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd as part of the full VET course of study. Students may access VET FEE-HELP to pay for some or all of their tuition fees for each unit.

#### **Tuition fee**

The tuition fee is the fee that Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd charges a student for each VET unit of study. VET FEE-HELP can only be used to pay for tuition fees.

#### **Services fee**

The Services fee is applicable to all accredited courses delivered from an Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd campus, in the workplace or through the Flexible Learning Centres.

**Eligibility Tuition  
Assurance Scheme  
VET Course  
Assurance Option  
VET Tuition Fee  
Repayment Option**

Students: An eligible student meets the requirements of clause 43 of HESA. Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd's requirement to protect students in the event that Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd ceases to provide a VET course of study in which a student is enrolled. If the VET course of Study (or a VET unit of Study thereof) that the full fee paying student is studying with Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd is cancelled, the student is entitled – through the VET Tuition Assurance Scheme – to an offer of a place in a similar VET course of study with a Second Provider without any requirement to pay the Second Provider any VET tuition fee for any replacement VET units OR to the VET Tuition Fee repayment Option. This known as the "VET Course Assurance Option". An alternative to the "VET Course Assurance Option", if the course (or a unit thereof) that the full fee paying student is studying with Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd is cancelled, the student is entitled – through the VET Tuition Assurance Scheme – to a re-crediting of his or her up-front VET payments for any VET unit of study that the student commences but does not complete because Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd ceases to provide the VET course of study of which the VET unit forms part.

**Policy**

The underlying principle on which VET FEE-HELP is based is that it removes the major financial barrier to entry to higher education, allowing students to defer the majority of costs of further study (their tuition fees) through a loan that is offered on favourable terms compared to commercial loan arrangements.

A VET FEE-HELP debt is repaid through the tax system once a person reaches the minimum income threshold level for repayment.

Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd will treat all intending or enrolled students who are entitled to VET FEE-HELP assistance fairly. Through this, and other related policies and procedures, Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd will provide open, fair, equitable, ethical and transparent process for students applying for, enrolling in, studying or withdrawing from VET FEE-HELP eligible courses.

**Fair treatment**

Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd 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 Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd. 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, Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd has written and implemented policies and procedures in accordance with relevant Acts, legislation, regulations and industry requirement.

**Equal benefits and opportunities**

Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd 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. Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd undertakes to ensure flexibility and unbiased consideration of all applications when dealing with persons applying for courses. Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd will not apply an income test when making decisions about which of their students are eligible for VET FEE-HELP assistance. See VET Provider Handbook, section 3.3; VET Provider Guidelines, Chapter 5 and Fair Treatment and Equal Opportunity.

## **Student grievance and review procedures – academic and non-academic**

Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd has robust 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 curriculum and non-curriculum issues.

## **Customer complaints and feedback process**

Complaints of any nature received by Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd will be treated with discretion and remain confidential. Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd will investigate all issues raised and respond to the complainant in a professional and timely.

## **Privacy and Personal Information**

Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd 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 Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd, in conducting business, applies management processes that protect and respect individual information privacy rights. See VET Provider Handbook, section 3.3; and Privacy policy and procedure.

## **Procedure**

Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd will meet its VET Tuition Fee repayment requirements through its membership of the ACPET tuition assurance scheme. Under the ACPET Tuition Assurance Scheme, if Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd ceases to provide a VET unit of study within a VET course of study, or a full course, then the eligible enrolled student is entitled to either:

- a. VET Course Assurance Option (an offer of a place in a similar VET course of study with a Second Provider), OR
- b. VET Tuition Fee Repayment Option (a re-crediting of his or her up-front VET payments for any VET unit of study that the student commences but does not complete).

***If the student chooses the VET tuition Fee Repayment Option, then the following process will apply:***

### **Re-crediting Entitlement**

If, Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd ceases to provide a course of which a unit forms a part then Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd will, re-credit a person's FEE-HELP balance with an amount equal to the amounts of VET FEE-HELP assistance that the person received for the VET unit of study if:

- a) the person has been enrolled in the unit with Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd; and
- b) the person has not completed the requirements for the unit during the period during which the person undertook, or was to undertake, the unit because Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd ceased to provide the unit as a result of ceasing to provide the course of which the unit formed part; and
- c) the VET tuition assurance requirements applied to Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd at the time Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd ceased to provide the unit; and
- d) the person chose the option designated under the VET tuition assurance requirements as VET tuition fee repayment in relation to the unit.

Otherwise Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd will re-credit a person's FEE-HELP balance with an amount equal to the amounts of VET FEE-HELP assistance that the person received for a VET unit of study if:

- (a) the person has been enrolled in the unit with Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd; and
- (b) the person has not completed the requirements for the unit during the period during which the person undertook, or was to undertake, the unit; and

- (c) Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd is satisfied that special circumstances apply to the person (see special circumstances below); and
- (d) the person applies in writing to Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd for re-crediting of the FEE-HELP balance; and
- (e) either:
  - i. the application is made before the end of the application period (see below); or
  - ii. Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd waives the requirement that the application be made before the end of that period, on the ground that it would not be, or was not, possible for the application to be made before the end of that period.

### **Refunds**

Students who withdraw from a course or unit on or before the census date for that unit are entitled to a full refund of any up-front tuition fees paid for the course or unit.

### **Special Circumstances**

Apply to the person if and only if the Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd is satisfied that circumstances apply to the person that:

- a) are beyond the person's control; and
- b) do not make their full impact on the person until on or after the \*census date for the \*VET unit of study in question; and
- c) make it impracticable for the person to complete the requirements for the unit in the period during which the person undertook, or was to undertake, the unit.

### **Application period**

If:

- a) the person applying for the re-crediting of the person's FEE-HELP balance in relation to a VET unit of study has withdrawn his or her enrolment in the unit; and
- b) Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd gives notice to the person that the withdrawal has taken effect;

the application period for the application is the period of 12 months after the day specified in the notice as the day the withdrawal takes effect.

If the above does not apply, the application period for the application is the period of 12 months after the period during which the person undertook, or was to undertake, the unit.

### **No re-credit**

A student who withdraws from a VET unit of study after the census date will not be eligible for a re-credit of any Tuition Fees paid unless they meet the requirements above.

### **Decisions on VET FEE-HELP re-credits**

In the first instance decisions on VET FEE-HELP re-credits will be made by the College Director. This position is currently held by Tammy White, 03 9633 0182, email [tammy.white@navitas.com](mailto:tammy.white@navitas.com). Review of decisions will be made by Raj Ganeshwar, 02 9964 6326, email [rajg@acl.edu.au](mailto:rajg@acl.edu.au). Raj will not be involved in making any of the original decisions; he is a member of the board of Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd.

### **Review of decisions to deny re-credit request**

A student may apply in writing to Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd for a review of a decision not to re-credit a student's VET FEE-HELP balance, stating the reasons why they are applying for a review. An application for a review must be made within 28 days from the day the person first received notice of the decision. Upon receipt of the written application, Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd will:

- a) Acknowledge receipt of the application for review.

- b) Consider each application on its merits.
- c) Appoint a review officer who will not be the same officer who made the original decision, and who is senior to that person.
- d) Reconsider the decision (the reviewer is able to confirm the original decision, vary the decision, or set aside the decision).
- e) Notify the applicant in writing, within 45 days of receipt of the written application, of the reviewer's decision and the reasons for making the decision.
- f) Advise the applicant of their right to appeal to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) for a review of the reviewer's decision if the applicant is unsatisfied with the outcome.

In Victoria the contact details of the closest Administrative Appeals Registry and the approximate costs of lodging an appeal with the Administrative Appeals Tribunal are as follows: Administrative Appeals Tribunal Level 16, HWT Tower, Southgate 40 City Road Southbank VIC 3006. Applications to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal for review of a decision may include an application fee of \$777. Applications cannot proceed until the application fee is paid or the fee has been waived. The application fee is refunded when the review is completed if the AAT decides that it is finalised in the applicants favour. In certain circumstances, the application fee is not payable. More information is available here: <http://www.aat.gov.au/FormsAndFees/Fees.htm>.

### **Publication**

Policies and procedures will be published on the Health Skills Australia Pty Ltd website at <http://www.healthskills.com.au/>.