

VET (TAFE) Student Refund Procedure

STATUS: For Uni-wide Comment 26-02-2021

NOTES: Policy Sponsor approved for uni-wide comment from 26th Feb - 4th March inclusive.

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Purpose

This procedure outlines the administrative processes for determining a student's eligibility for a refund and subsequent payment or fee adjustment.

Scope

This procedure applies to all VET students, current VET applicants, or former VET students at Federation University (formerly University of Ballarat), both full fee paying and government supported students.

Legislative Context

This policy is in accord with the:

- Higher Education Support Act 2003
- VET Student Loans Act 2016
- Skills First Program – 2021 Dual Sector VET Funding Contract
- Skills First Program – Guidelines about Fees

- Federation University Statute 9.2 Fees & Charges

Definitions

Term	Definition
Census Date	The census date is the deadline by which students enrolled in a VET Student Loan program must take certain actions, such as withdraw from a unit(s) or a full program without financial penalty. A census date applies to each unit.
Fee For Service	Accredited or non-accredited short course/program, usually delivered for commercial purposes.
Full Fee Student	A Full Fee Student is a student who is ineligible for a Government Subsidised Place (GSP) or a student enrolled in a fee for service program.
Government Subsidised Place (GSP)	A GSP is a Vocational Educational training place for which the Victorian government makes a financial contribution through the Skills First Program. Only eligible individuals can access a GSP place.
Eligible individual	An eligible individual enrolled in an eligible funded program. Eligible individuals pay a tuition fee which contributes towards the total cost of their program.
Material Fee	The cost of materials and other incidentals purchased by the University and provided to the student, such as tools for trade, equipment, uniforms, textbooks, excursions, etc.
Program	A series of units of vocational education and training, or the modules of a VET accredited program that combine to become a qualification from an accredited Training Package or skill set.
Program Commencement Date	The date of first scheduled training for the first unit towards the completion of the qualification in which the Eligible Individual has enrolled.
Skills First Program	The Skills First Program, governing body for Further Education and Training, www.education.vic.gov.au
Tuition Fee	The enrolment fee for a unit determined by the University for Domestic and International Full Fee paying students and GSP eligible students.
Unit	Is the unit of learning in a VET qualification and includes assessment requirements and the specification of the standards of performance required in the workplace as defined in a training package or accredited program. In Campus Solutions 'unit' may be replaced with 'course'.
VET	Vocational Education and Training
VET Student Loans	Australian government loan program to assist eligible students enrolled in approved higher level vocational education and training (VET) programs to pay all or part of their tuition fees.

General Principles

If a VET program is cancelled by Federation University before commencement or before a student completes the requirements a full refund will apply. Program cancellation does not include circumstances where a program is superseded on the national register (training.gov.au) and a student **is required to enrol in the replacement program**.

VET Programs at Certificate IV level and below

To be eligible for a tuition fee refund or credit of tuition fees a student must formally withdraw from their program within 4 weeks (28 calendar days) from the program commencement date (for the current enrolment year). To withdraw from their program a student must either complete and sign the withdrawal form, which is available from the teacher or program coordinator, or advise of their intention to withdraw in writing. Any graded units will not be eligible for a refund or credit of tuition fees.

Any students who fail to attend and do not officially withdraw in writing may be withdrawn by the program area. If a student withdrawn under these circumstances has fees outstanding after the program area makes the decision to withdraw in line with Federation University policy, the student will still be liable for their fees.

Examples:

1. A student is enrolled with a program commencement date of 1 February and formally withdraws on 25 February. A full credit of tuition fees is issued and the student is eligible for a refund as the withdrawal occurred within 4 weeks (28 calendar days) of the program commencement date (excluding any graded units).
2. A student is enrolled with a program commencement date of 1 February and formally withdraws on 10 March. The student is not entitled to a credit of tuition fees or refund as the withdrawal occurred more than 4 weeks (28 calendar) days after the program commencement date.

Material fees will be refunded at the discretion of the program area, for example if the materials have not yet become the student's property.

If a student's fees remain unpaid when they withdraw or are cancelled from their program 4 weeks after the program commencement date, the student will still be liable to pay those outstanding fees. Outstanding fees remain on a student's record indefinitely and will impact future enrolment and access to grades for any completed units.

VET programs at Diploma level and above**(including programs eligible for VET Student Loans)**

For VET programs at Diploma level and above, a full refund or credit of all tuition fees will be made if the withdrawal application is submitted on, or prior to, the census date(s) for the enrolled unit(s). If a signed withdrawal form or written intention to withdraw is not submitted on or prior to the census date(s) then the student will not be eligible for a refund or adjustment to their VET Student Loans debt. Any graded units will not be eligible for a refund or credit of tuition fees.

Any students who fail to attend and do not officially withdraw in writing may be withdrawn by the program area. If a student withdrawn under these circumstances has fees outstanding after the program area makes the decision to withdraw in line with Federation University policy, the student will still be liable for their fees.

Examples:

1. A student is enrolled in a Diploma program and has a census date of 3 March for an enrolled unit. The student formally withdraws from the unit on 3 March. A full credit of tuition fees is issued and, where the student has a VET Student Loan, they will not incur a debt for the withdrawn unit as the withdrawal occurred on the applicable census date. If the student paid upfront they will be eligible for a refund.
2. A student is enrolled in a Diploma program and has a census date of 3 March for an enrolled unit. The student formally withdraws from the unit on 3 April. The student is not entitled to a credit of tuition fees, adjustment to their VET Student Loans debt, or a refund as the withdrawal occurred after the census date.

Material fees will be refunded at the discretion of the program area, depending on whether the materials have been issued to the student.

If a student's fees remain unpaid when they withdraw after the census date, the student will still be liable to pay those outstanding fees. Outstanding fees remain on a student's record indefinitely and will impact future enrolment and access to grades for any completed units.

Accredited and Non Accredited Short Courses/Programs

To be eligible for a refund or credit of tuition fees a student must formally advise their intention to withdraw within 5 business days of the short course commencement date. Withdrawal made within 5 business days will forfeit 100% of the short course fee.

Where a student notifies of their inability to attend the scheduled delivery dates, all attempts will be made to re-book the applicant for a future delivery date.

This excludes short courses delivered under commercial arrangements where a specific agreement is in place.

Withdrawal in Exceptional Circumstances

VET Student Loans students withdrawing after the census date, due to exceptional or extenuating circumstances, should refer to the Remission of Debt form which can be obtained from Student HQ.

All other VET students withdrawing after the 4 week withdrawal date due to exceptional or extenuating circumstances need to provide in writing their justification for a fee credit or fee refund along with supporting documentation. Application for special consideration will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and should be addressed to:

Attn: Manager, Student Finance (TAFE)
email: studentfees@federation.edu.au

Payment of Refunds

The University will pay all refunds within 20 University working days of receiving a legible, complete and correct application, including supporting documentation if required.

Amounts less than \$10.00 AUD will be refunded only by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) to an Australian bank account.

Unclaimed Refunds

If a refund payment remains un-presented (unclaimed) for a period of no less than six (6) months, the instrument will be cancelled and the University will re-credit the remaining funds to the student's account, less any bank charges. Students will be required to re-apply for the refund. The balance will be treated in accordance with the Credit Balances section of this Procedure.

Refund Appeals Process

A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of an application for a refund has the right to request a review of the decision. The student must make this request in writing within 28 days of receiving the initial decision, to the University Review Officer, Federation University Australia.

Attn: Manager, Student Finance (TAFE)
PO Box 663

Ballarat VIC 3350
Australia

Or by emailing the request and all documentation to studentfees@federation.edu.au (Attn: Manger, Student Finance (TAFE)).

The student must set out the reasons for requesting a review of the decision and provide any relevant supporting documentation. Each request for review will be considered on its merits in conjunction with the supporting documentation provided. The supporting documentation should provide enough detail for the University Review Officer (Manager, Student Finance (TAFE) or delegate) to make an informed decision regarding the request for review.

The review process will commence within 10 working days of lodgement of the request for review and the University Review Officer will provide written acknowledgement of receipt of the request. Once a decision has been made the University Review Officer will notify the student in writing of the decision and the reasons for making the decision.

The decision of the University Review Officer is final and there is no further avenue of appeal within the University.

If a VET Student Loans student wishes to take the matter further, they have the right to access the external complaints and appeals process of the Commonwealth Ombudsman. Further information can be obtained via the following link: www.ombudsman.gov.au.

Australian Consumer Law

Nothing in this procedure prevents a student from taking action under the Australian Consumer Law.

Deceased Student

The personal legal representative of the Deceased Estate must apply for any excess payments which are to be refunded. The administrators must supply details about who the refund is payable to. The University reserves the right to request official documentation to support any such claims.

Bank Charges

Bank charges may be incurred by the recipient of the payment. These charges are imposed by the banking institutions and are deducted from the payment made by the University. The University has no control over such charges and therefore does not bear any responsibility for amounts deducted.

Banking Regulations

Under banking regulations, if a student had made payment with a credit card any refund must be credited to the original credit card. Federation University Australia will refund to the original credit card if the initial payment was made within the previous 12 months, otherwise the refund will be processed by cheque.

Refunds not included elsewhere

Applications for refunds that are not covered by any of the provisions of this policy will be determined on a case-by-case basis, initially by the Manager, Student Finance (TAFE).

Refund Procedures (Actions)

ACTION	RESPONSIBILITY	COMMENTS
Withdrawal from Program or Unit	Student / Faculty Representative / Student HQ	<p>As per the Enrolment Withdrawal (TAFE) Procedure</p> <p>The program area assesses the student's eligibility for a refund of material fees and records the information on the withdrawal form.</p> <p>Student HQ forwards a copy of the withdrawal form, including details of the material fee to be credited, to Student Finance.</p>
Adjusting Material Fee Charges	Student Finance	Student Finance staff make the necessary adjustments to the material fee charged to the student.
Applying for a Refund	Student / Student Finance	<p>All students applying for a refund must complete the Refund Request Form (Domestic Students).</p> <p>Completed forms are to be submitted to Student Finance.</p>
Assess Refund Application	Student Finance	Student Finance will assess the refund application.
Remittance of Refund	Student Finance / Finance Hub	<p>The refund will usually be processed within 20 University business days of the receipt of a completed refund form.</p> <p>Details of the refund are recorded on the Refund Request form and filed in Finance.</p>

Credit Balances

Normally overpayment (excess payment) of student fees resulting in a credit balance on the student's account will automatically be transferred as payment or part payment of the student's fees payable or to other outstanding debts owing to the University (if applicable). It is the responsibility of the student to be aware of all credit amounts (excess payments) on their account and to maintain current address and contact details. Students can apply for a refund of a credit balance.

Credit amounts on a student's account (relating to VET enrolments) up to and including \$10AUD will be forfeited to the University and processed as a forfeit of an insignificant credit balance. The University deems that credit balances are insignificant balances if the credit balance is less than \$10AUD and the student's VET program status is inactive for more than one year.

VET student's with unclaimed credit amounts greater than \$10AUD will be notified in writing of their credit amount. If refund applications are not received within twelve weeks of the date of the written communication, credit balances will be deemed as unclaimed and dealt with by the University according to the Unclaimed Monies Act 2008.

Responsibility

COO/CFO (as the Approval Authority) is responsible for monitoring the implementation, outcomes and scheduled review of this procedure.

Associate Director, Financial Operations (as the Policy Sponsor) is responsible for maintaining the content of this procedure as delegated by the (title above).

Supporting Documents

- Enrolment Withdrawal (TAFE) Procedure

Forms.

- [Refund Request Form Domestic Students](#) (PDF 288.0kb)

Implementation and Communication

The VET Student Refund Procedure will be communicated throughout Federation University via:

1. an Announcement Notice under 'FedNews' on the University's website and through Federation University's Policy - 'Recently Approved Documents' webpage to alert the University-wide community of the approved Policy;
2. inclusion on the Federation University Policy, Procedure and Forms website; and/or
3. distribution of e-mails to Head of School / Head of Department / University staff; and/or
4. documentation distribution, eg. posters, brochures.

Records Management

Title	Location	Responsible Officer	Minimum Retention Period
Refund Request Form	Student Finance records / Finance Refund File	Manager, Student Finance (TAFE) Manager, Financial Services	7 years
Application for Remission of VET Student Loans Debt	Student HQ	Manager, Student HQ	7 years
Request for Adjustment / Refund	Student Finance records	Manager, Student Finance (TAFE)	7 years
Withdrawal Form	Student HQ	Manager, Student HQ	7 years

Records Disposal

University records must only be disposed of in accordance with the University's Records Disposal Process as outlined in the [Records Framework Procedure](#). Authorisation must be obtained from the Head of School/Centre/College, Records Management Services and the Director of Academic Services or their delegate prior to disposal. Records must not be destroyed where it is known that those records may likely be required in evidence, either now or in the future