

VET (TAFE) Student Refund Procedure

Policy code:	OG1876
Policy owner:	Head, Financial Operations
Approval authority:	Chief Financial Officer
Approval date:	16 January 2024
Next review date:	05 March 2024

Table of Contents

Purpose	1
Scope	1
Legislative Context	2
Definitions	2
Actions	3
Refunds for Program Cancellations	3
Refunds for VET Programs at Certificate IV Level or below	3
Examples	4
Refunds for VET programs at Diploma level and above (including programs eligible for VET Student Loans)	5
Examples.	6
Refunds for Accredited and Non Accredited Short Courses/Programs	6
Refunds for Withdrawal in Exceptional Circumstances	6
Refunds for Deceased Students	7
Refunds not included elsewhere	7
Applying For a Refund	8
Assessing and Paying Refunds	9
Appealing a Refund Decision	11
Remission of HELP Debt (VET Student Loan)	12
Responsibility	14
Supporting Documents	15
Implementation and Communication	15
Records Management	15

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, 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.

Actions

Determining Eligibility for Refunds and Liability for Unpaid Fees

A student's eligibility for a refund will depend on the timing and reason for their withdrawal as well as the type of program that they were enrolled in.

Refunds for Program Cancellations

	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	STEPS
A	Refunding students for program cancellations	Program area/Student HQ/ Student Finance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If a VET program is cancelled by Federation University before commencement or before a student completes the requirements a full refund will apply. 2. 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.

Refunds for VET Programs at Certificate IV Level or below

	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	STEPS
A.	Refunding students who withdraw	Program area/Student HQ/ Student Finance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 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). 2. 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

			<p>withdraw in writing. Any graded units will not be eligible for a refund or credit of tuition fees.</p> <p>3. 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 (see below).</p>
B.	Refunding material fees	Program area/Student HQ/Student Finance	<p>1. 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.</p>
C.	Liability for unpaid fees after withdrawal or cancellation from program	Student	<p>1. 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.</p> <p>2. Outstanding fees remain on a student's record indefinitely and will impact future enrolment and access to grades for any completed units.</p>

Examples

- Eligible for refund:** 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).
- Not eligible for refund:** 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.

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

	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	STEPS
A.	Refunding students who withdraw	Program area/Student HQ/ Student Finance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 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. 2. 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 (see below). Where a student's enrolment is cancelled after the census date, the cancellation will not take final effect for at least 28 days, to allow the student to initiate grievance procedures.
B.	Refunding material fees	Program area/Student HQ/ Student Finance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Material fees will be refunded at the discretion of the program area, depending on whether the materials have been issued to the student.
C.	Liability for unpaid fees after withdrawal or cancellation from program	Student	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 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.

			2. Outstanding fees remain on a student's record indefinitely and will impact future enrolment and access to grades for any completed units.
--	--	--	--

Examples.

- Eligible for refund:** 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.
- Not eligible for refund:** 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.

Refunds for Accredited and Non Accredited Short Courses/Programs

	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	STEPS
A	Refunding students who withdraw	Program area/Student HQ/ Student Finance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To be eligible for a refund or credit of tuition fees a student must formally advise their intention to withdraw at least 5 business days before 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.

Refunds for Withdrawal in Exceptional Circumstances

	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	STEPS
A	VET Student Loans students withdrawing after the census date	Student	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> VET Student Loans students withdrawing after the census date, due to exceptional or

			extenuating circumstances, should complete the Remission of Debt Form [see Forms section].
B.	All other VET students withdrawing after the 4 week withdrawal date	Student	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 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 feecredit 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: 2. Attn: Manager, Student Finance TAFE email: studentfees@federation.edu.au

Refunds for Deceased Students

	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	STEPS
A.	Applying for a refund for a deceased student	The personal legal representative of the Deceased Estate	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The personal legal representative of the Deceased Estate must apply for any excess payments which are to be refunded. 2. The administrators must supply details about who the refund is payable to. 3. The University reserves the right to request official documentation to support any such claims.

Refunds not included elsewhere

	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	STEPS
A.	Assessing other refund applications	Student Finance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Applications for refunds not covered by any of the provisions of this procedure will be determined on a case-by-case basis, initially by the

			Manager, Student Finance TAFE.
--	--	--	--------------------------------

Applying For a Refund

	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	STEPS
A	Refunding material fees	Program area/Student HQ/ Student Finance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The program area assesses the student's eligibility for a refund of material fees and records the information on the withdrawal form. 2. Student HQ raises a request in Service Now for Student Finance to action, including details of the material fee to be credited, and attach the withdrawal form to the request. 3. Student Finance staff make the necessary adjustments to the material fee charged to the student and refund accordingly.
B.	Refunding tuition fees	Student HQ/Student Finance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student HQ enters the relevant refund code against each withdrawn unit, as per the VET student refund procedure (code 'NORF' for no refund or code 'FULL' for refund). 2. Student HQ recalculates fees for any units with the FULL refund code. 3. Student is issued an amended student invoice for any fee adjustments (invoices are generated weekly).
		Student	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where a student account is in credit, the student can apply for a refund by completing the Refund Request Form (Domestic Students). 2. Submits an application as per instructions on the online form.

Assessing and Paying Refunds

	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	STEPS
A.	Assessing refund applications	Student Finance	1. Assesses the application and determines whether a refund is payable.
B.	Payment of refunds	Student Finance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The University will pay all refunds within 20 University working days of receiving a legible, complete and correct application, including supporting documentation if required. 2. Amounts less than \$10.00 AUD will be refunded only by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) to an Australian bank account. 3. 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. 4. 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. 5. Details of the refund are recorded on the Refund Request Form and filed as per the Records Management section below.
C.	Unclaimed Refunds	Student Finance	1. If a refund payment remains unrepresented (unclaimed) for a period of no less than six (6) months, the instrument will be

			<p>cancelled and the University will re-credit the remaining funds to the student's account, less any bank charges.</p> <p>2. Students will be required to re-apply for the refund. The balance will be treated in accordance with the Credit Balances section below.</p>
D.	Credit Balances	Student Finance	<p>1. 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.</p> <p>2. 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.</p> <p>3. VET students 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</p>

			the University according to the Unclaimed Monies Act 2008.
--	--	--	--

Appealing a Refund Decision

	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	STEPS
A.	Appealing a refund decision	Student	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A student who is dissatisfied with the outcome of an application for a refund has the right to request a review of the decision. 2. The student must make this request in writing within 28 days of receiving the initial decision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attn: Manager, Student Finance TAFE • PO Box 663 • Ballarat VIC 3350 • Australia 3. Or by emailing the request and all documentation to studentfees@federation.edu.au (Attn: Manger, Student Finance (TAFE)). 4. 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 Manager, Student Finance (TAFE) or delegate to make an informed decision regarding the request for review. 5. The review process will commence within 10 working days of lodgement of the request for review and written acknowledgement of receipt of the request will be provided. Once a decision has been made the student will be

			<p>notified in writing of the decision and the reasons for making the decision.</p> <p>6. The decision is final and there is no further avenue of appeal within the University.</p> <p>7. A VET Student Loans student can apply for a re-credit of their HELP debt. Refer to Remission of Debt below.</p> <p>8. A VET Student Loans student also has 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.</p> <p>9. Nothing in this procedure prevents a student from taking action under the Australian Consumer Law.</p>
--	--	--	--

Remission of HELP Debt (VET Student Loan)

In special circumstances, a student can apply to have their HELP debt re-credited (known as remission of debt).

	ACTIVITY	RESPONSIBILITY	STEPS
A.	Eligibility	Student	<p>A student may be eligible for remission HELP debt for a course if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circumstances beyond their control occurred which prevented them from passing the course, and • The circumstances did not make their full impact on the student until on or after the census date for the course or part of the course, and • The circumstances made it impracticable for the student to complete the requirements of the course, or part of the course, during their enrolment in the course, or part of the course.

			<p>Applications for a remission of HELP debt can be submitted up to 12 months after:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The census date for the course, or part of the course, or within the period as extended by the provider; • The date the student withdrew from the course (if they withdrew from it); or • The end date of the course (if they didn't withdraw); or • The last date they were due to submit/complete an assessment in the course, if they were permitted to do so after the course end date.
B.	Applying for remission of debt	Student	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete the remission of debt application form and include relevant independent supporting documents (evidence) to confirm the special circumstances and relevant dates. Submission details are included on the form. 2. A confirmation email will be sent on receipt of the application.
C.	Assessing	Student HQ	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. An assessment will be made and the student notified of the outcome within 60 days of the date the application was received.
D.	Review and appeals	Student	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If the student is dissatisfied with the outcome of their application, they can apply to have the decision reviewed by an independent review officer (as appointed by the chief executive officer or delegate. An application for review must be submitted within 28 days of notification of the initial decision. 2. If the application outcome is reviewed and the student is still dissatisfied, they can apply to the Administrative

			<p>Appeals Tribunal (AAT) for a further review of the decision.</p> <p>There is no charge to the student for a remission of debt application or review of decisions, other than review by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal.</p> <p>A student seeking a review will not be victimised or discriminated against for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • seeking review or reconsideration of a decision; or • using the provider's processes or procedures about dealing with grievances; or • making an application for recrediting of the student's HELP balance under Part 6 of the VET Student Loans Act 2016. <p>Under section 71 of the VET Student Loans Act 2016, an application for re-crediting can be made within 5 years after the census date for the course, or the part of the course, concerned, or within that period as extended by the Secretary.</p> <p>The (VET Student Loans) Secretary may re-credit a student's HELP balance in relation to special circumstances if the course provider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is unable to act or is being wound up or has been dissolved; or • Has failed to act and the Secretary is satisfied that the failure is unreasonable.
--	--	--	---

Responsibility

- Chief Financial Officer (as the Approval Authority) is responsible for monitoring the implementation, outcomes and scheduled review of this procedure.
- Head, Financial Operations (as the Document Owner) is responsible for maintaining the content of this procedure as delegated by the Chief Financial Officer.

Supporting Documents

- [Enrolment Withdrawal \(TAFE\) Procedure](#)

Forms.

- [Refund Application - Domestic Student](#) (PDF 970.1kb)
- [Remission of Debt Application Form](#) (PDF 230.5kb)

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
Remission of Debt Application Form	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