

VET (TAFE) Student Refund Procedure

Policy code:	OG1876
Policy owner:	Head, Financial Operations
Approval authority:	Chief Financial Officer
Approval date:	23 January 2026
Next review date:	31 May 2027

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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, relating to VET/TAFE students.

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 procedure is in accord with the:

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

Supporting documents

- [The Federation University Australia Statute 2021](#)
- [Federation University Australia \(Students\) Regulations](#)
- [Federation University Australia \(Operations\) Regulations](#)
- [Student Fees and Charges Procedure](#)
- [Enrolment Withdrawal \(TAFE\) Procedure](#)

Definitions

Term	Definition
Census Date	The deadline by which a student enrolled in a VET Student Loan (VSL) course must take certain actions, such as withdraw from a unit(s) or a full course without financial penalty. A census date applies to each unit.
Course	A series of units of vocational education and training, or the modules of a VET accredited course that combine to become a qualification from an accredited Training Package or skill set.
Course 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.
Credit balance	Excess payment resulting in a credit balance on the student's financial account.
Eligible student	A student who meets the eligibility criteria.
Fee credit	Removal of financial liability due to dropping an enrolled unit or reversal of a material fee. Where a student has made payment for units that have a fee credit applied they are eligible for a refund.
Fee For Service	Accredited or non-accredited short courses, usually delivered for commercial purposes.
Full Fee-Paying Student	A student who is ineligible for a Government Subsidised Place (GSP) or a student enrolled in a fee for service course.
Government Subsidised Place (GSP)	A VET place for which the Victorian government makes a financial contribution through the Skills First Program. Only eligible individuals can access a GSP.

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.
Pre-paid Fees	Fees that are collected upfront (in advance) before the relevant services have been provided. These include payments made at any time before, during or after the student enrolls.
Skills First Program	Governing body for Further Education and Training.
Student	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. a person enrolled at the University in a unit leading to a degree, diploma, certificate, licence or other award; or b. a person who is designated as a student or is of a class of persons designated as students by the Council.
Technical and Further Education (TAFE)	TAFE institutes are Government funded Registered Training Organisations RTO that offer Vocational Education and Training (VET) relating to a specific industry or occupation.
Tuition Fee	Enrolment fee for a unit determined by the University for Full Fee-paying students and Government Subsidised Place 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 course.
Vocational Education and Training (VET)	Consists of different training products including qualifications, units of competency, skill sets (apprenticeships and traineeships) or accredited courses. VET qualifications include but are not limited to Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE), Certificate I - IV, Diploma, Advanced Diploma, Skills Sets and short courses.
VET Student Loans (VSL)	Australian government loan program to assist eligible students enrolled in approved higher level vocational education and training (VET) courses to pay all or part of their tuition fees.

Actions

Actions required to meet this procedure are outlined in the following sections:

Determining eligibility for refunds and liability for unpaid fees

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

Refunds for course cancellations

	Activity	Responsibility	Steps
A	Refunding students for course cancellations	Fed TAFE course area/Student Administration/Student Finance	1. If a VET course is cancelled by Federation University

			<p>before commencement or before a student completes the requirements a refund of up-front tuition fees and/or re-crediting of a student's HELP balance will apply for affected parts of the course.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 2. Course cancellation does not include circumstances where a course is superseded on the national register (training.gov.au) and a student is required to enrol in the replacement course. 3. If Federation University is unable to provide services for which a student has prepaid the student will be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Placed into an equivalent course ensuring the new location is suitable to the student and the student receives the full services for which they have pre-paid at no additional cost; or • Paid a full refund of any pre-paid fees for services yet to be delivered.
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Refunds for VET Courses at Certificate IV Level or below

	Activity	Responsibility	Steps
A.	Refunding students who withdraw from a course	Student/Fed TAFE course area/ Student Administration	<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 course within 4 weeks (28 calendar days) from the course commencement date. 2. For a student enrolling in a second or subsequent year of study in the same course the commencement date is the first unit start date for the current enrolment year. 3. If the course withdrawal is requested after 28 days of commencement the student only will be eligible for a fee refund or credit of tuition fees

			<p>for any units where the unit start date has not passed at the time the withdrawal is requested.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> A student will remain financially liable for any graded units and a tuition fee refund or tuition credit will not be granted. To withdraw from their course a student must either complete and sign the withdrawal form, which is available from the teacher or course coordinator, or advise of their intention to withdraw in writing. Any students who fail to attend and do not officially withdraw in writing may be withdrawn by the course area. If a student withdrawn under these circumstances has fees outstanding after the course area makes the decision to withdraw in line with Federation University policy and procedure, the student will still be financially liable for fees according to the clauses listed above.
B.	Refunding students who withdraws from a unit	Student/Fed TAFE course area/ Student Administration	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To be eligible for a tuition fee refund or credit of tuition fees a student must formally withdraw from a unit of study before the unit start date. A student will remain financially liable for any graded units and a refund will not be granted To withdraw from a unit the student must either complete and sign the withdrawal form, which is available from the teacher or course coordinator, or advise of their intention to withdraw in writing.
C.	Refunding material fees	Fed TAFE course area/Student Administration/Student Finance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Material fees will be refunded at the discretion of the course area, for example if the

			materials have not yet become the student's property.
D.	Liability for unpaid fees after withdrawal or cancellation	Student	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. If a student's fees remain unpaid when they withdraw or are cancelled from their course 4 weeks after the course commencement date, the student will still be financially liable to pay those outstanding fees. 2. If a student's fees remain unpaid when they withdraw from a unit after the unit start date the student will still be financially liable to pay those outstanding fees. 3. Outstanding fees remain on a student's record indefinitely and will impact future enrolment and access to grades for any completed units.

Examples

1. **Eligible for refund:** A student is enrolled with a course commencement date of 1 February and formally withdraws on 25 February. A full credit of tuition fees/refund is applicable as the withdrawal occurred within 4 weeks (28 calendar days) of the course commencement date (excluding any graded units).
2. **Eligible for a partial refund:** A student is enrolled with a course commencement date of 1 February and formally withdraws on 10 March. The student is not eligible for a full credit of tuition fees/refund as the withdrawal occurred more than 4 weeks (28 calendar days) after the course commencement date. The student is eligible for a fee credit/refund for units where the unit start date has not passed at the time the withdrawal is requested.
3. **Not eligible for a refund:** A student is enrolled with a course commencement date of 1 February and formally withdraws on 20 August. The student is not eligible for a credit of tuition fees/refund as the withdrawal occurred more than 4 weeks (28 calendar days) after the course commencement date and the start date for all enrolled units has passed at the time the withdrawal is requested.

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

	Activity	Responsibility	Steps
A.	Refunding students who withdraw	Fed TAFE course area/Student Administration/Student Finance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. For VET courses 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

			<p>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 remain financially liable and 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.</p> <p>2. A student who fails to attend and does not officially withdraw in writing may be withdrawn by the course area. If a student withdrawn under these circumstances has fees outstanding after the course area makes the decision to withdraw in line with Federation University policy and procedure, the student will still be financially 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.</p>
B.	Refunding material fees	Fed TAFE course area/Student Administration/Student Finance	<p>1. Material fees will be refunded at the discretion of the course area, depending on whether the materials have been issued to the student.</p>
C.	Liability for unpaid fees after withdrawal or cancellation from course	Student	<p>1. If a student's fees remain unpaid when they withdraw after the census date, the student will still be financially 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.

1. **Eligible for refund:** A student is enrolled in a Diploma course 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. **Not eligible for refund:** A student is enrolled in a Diploma course 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

	Activity	Responsibility	Steps
A	Refunding students who withdraw	Fed TAFE course area/Student Administration/Student Finance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. 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 2. Withdrawal made within 5 business days will forfeit 100% of the short course fee. 3. 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"> 1. VET Student Loan students withdrawing after the census date, due to exceptional or extenuating circumstances, should complete a Remission of Debt application [Refer to Remission of Debt section in this procedure].

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 fee credit or fee refund and provide supporting documentation. Application for special consideration will be assessed on a case-by-case basis and should be addressed to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federation University Australia • Attn: Senior Manager, Student Finance • email: studentfees@federation.edu.au
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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 Senior Manager, Student Finance.

Administrative actions for crediting tuition and material fees

	Activity	Responsibility	Steps
A	Crediting material fees	Fed TAFE course area/Student Administration/Student Finance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The course area assesses the student's eligibility for a credit of material fees and records the information on the withdrawal form. 2. Student Administration 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 in my Student Centre.
B.	Crediting tuition fees	Student Administration/Student Finance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Student Administration 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) in myStudent Centre. 2. Student Administration recalculates fees for any units with the FULL refund code to credit tuition fees. 3. Student is issued an amended tax invoice/statement for any fee adjustments.

Applying for a refund

	Activity	Responsibility	Steps
A.	Refunding a credit balance	Student	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Where a credit of tuition or material fees results in an excess balance on the student account, the student can apply for a refund by completing the Refund Request Form (Domestic Students). Refer to Forms section in this procedure.

			2. Student submits an application as per instructions on the online form.
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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	1. The University will pay all refunds within 20 working days of receiving a legible, complete and correct application, including supporting documentation if required. 2. Bank charges may be incurred by the recipient of the refund payment. These charges are imposed by the banking institutions and are deducted from the refund payment made by the University. The University has no control over such charges and therefore does not bear any responsibility for amounts deducted. 3. 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 Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT).
C.	Unclaimed Refunds	Student Finance	1. If a refund payment remains unpresented (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.

			2. Students will be required to re-apply for the refund. The balance will be treated in accordance with the Credit Balances section in this procedure.
D.	Credit Balances	Student Finance	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Normally overpayment (excess payment) of student fees, resulting in a credit balance on the student account will be transferred as payment to any fees payable or outstanding debts owing to the University. It is the responsibility of the student to be aware of all credit amounts (excess payments) on their account and to maintain current contact details. Students can apply for a refund of a credit balance. 2. A credit balance on a student's account, up to and including \$50AUD, 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 \$50AUD and the student's VET course status is inactive for more than one enrolment year. 3. VET students with unclaimed credit amounts greater than \$50AUD 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.

Refund appeals process

The following appeals process is a separate application from the Remission of HELP Debt application for VET Student Loans students.

	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, to the University Review Officer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federation University Australia • Attn: Senior Manager, Student Finance • Email: studentfees@federation.edu.au 3. 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 Senior Manager, Student Finance or delegate to make an informed decision regarding the request for review. 4. 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 notified in writing of the decision and the reasons for making the decision.

			<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 5. The decision is final and there is no further avenue of appeal within the University. 6. A VET Student Loans student has the right to access the external complaints and appeals process of the National Student Ombudsman. Further information can be obtained via the following link: https://www.nso.gov.au/. 7. Nothing in this procedure prevents a student from taking action under the Australian Consumer Law.
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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 unit if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circumstances beyond their control occurred which prevented them from passing the unit, and • The circumstances did not make their full impact on the student until on or after the census date for the unit or part of the unit, and • The circumstances made it impracticable for the student to complete the requirements of the unit, or part of the unit, 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 unit, or part of the unit, or within the period as extended by the provider;

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The date the student withdrew from the unit (if they withdrew from it); or • The end date of the unit (if they didn't withdraw); or • The last date they were due to submit/complete an assessment in the unit, if they were permitted to do so after the unit end date.
B.	Applying for remission of debt	Student	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Complete a remission of debt application and include relevant independent supporting documents (evidence) to confirm the special circumstances and relevant dates. 2. A confirmation email will be sent on receipt of the application.
C.	Assessing	Student Administration	<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 Appeals Tribunal (AAT) for a further review of the decision. <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 unit, or the part of the unit, 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.
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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.

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, e.g. posters, brochures.

Forms/Record keeping

Title	Location	Responsible officer	Minimum retention period
Refund Request Form (Domestic Student)	Student Finance records / Finance Refund File	Senior Manager, Student Finance	7 years
Remission of Debt Application Form	Student Administration	Coordinator, Student Administration	7 years
Request for Adjustment / Refund Appeal	Student Finance records	Senior Manager, Student Finance	7 years
Withdrawal Form	Student Administration	Coordinator, TAFE Student Administration	7 years

- [Remission of Debt application](#)

Forms.

- [Refund Application - Domestic Student](#) (PDF 1043.2kb)