



Tuition Fee refund or re-credit for VET Student Loans enabled courses

## Tuition Fee Refund or Re-credit for VET Student Loans Enabled Courses Policy

**Policy number: CX01**

**Version: 3.0**

**Policy Owner: General Manager Organisational Services**

**Subject Expert: Manager, Assessments & Admissions**

**Next review date: 29 March 2027**

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### 1. PURPOSE

This policy outlines the principles and procedures for managing tuition fee refunds and re-crediting of a student's FEE-HELP balance for courses that are eligible under the VET Student Loans (VSL) program at South Metropolitan TAFE.

It is also to ensure all South Metropolitan TAFE staff involved in administration of VET Student Loan enabled courses have the appropriate information and training as to the correct procedures for processing refunds for students in the VET Student Loan enabled courses/VET units of study.

### 2. SCOPE

This policy applies to all students enrolled in VET Student Loans-enabled courses offered by South Metropolitan TAFE and who:

- Have applied for a VET Student Loan; and
- Withdraw from their course (or part thereof); or
- Are unable to complete their course due to special circumstances.

### 3. POLICY GOVERNANCE

- VET Student Loans Act 2016
- VET Student Loans Rules 2016
- VET Student Loans (Courses and Loan Caps) Determination 2016
- Department of Training and Workforce Development VET Fees & Charges Policy
- Higher Education Support Act 2003
- Registration Standards for Registered Training Organisations (SRTOs) 2025
- Student Identifiers Act 2014

### 4. KEY TERMS

Administrative Date	16 days prior to a unit(s) census date.
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Census Date	The last day a student may withdraw from a VET Unit of Study in which they are enrolled without incurring a liability for tuition fees or a VET Student Loan debt.
DEWR	Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.
eCAF	Electronic Commonwealth Assistance Form, this is an online form which registers a student's loan with the Commonwealth Government.
FEE-HELP Balance	The amount of a student's VET Student Loan limit that is available to use.
Secretary	Refers to the Secretary of the Department of Education, Skills and Employment.
Special Circumstances	Circumstances that are beyond the student's control, did not make their full impact until on or after the census day, and made it impractical for the student to complete the unit(s) of study.
SM TAFE	Refers to South Metropolitan TAFE, "the Organisation" including all its campuses, departments, centres, business units, corporate units and delivery centres.
VET Course of Study	A qualification that has been approved by Department of Education as eligible for VET Student Loan Assistance.
VET Student Loan	An income contingent Commonwealth loan scheme where eligible students may use to defer paying fees for units of study for their Vocational Education and Training (VET) enrolment. This student loan is part of the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP).
VET Unit of Study	A published unit of study that forms part of a VET Course of Study
VSL	See: VET Student Loan

## 5. PRINCIPLES

### 5.1. Policy Principles:

South Metropolitan TAFE will conduct this procedure in compliance with the VET Student Loans Act 2016, and the VET Student Loans Rules 2016 and the VET Student Loan Providers manual.

For the purposes of this procedure:

- A **student** is an:
  - Australian Citizen; or
  - a qualifying New Zealand citizen (subclass visa 444); or
  - a permanent humanitarian visa holder, who is usually resident in Australia; or
  - a pacific engagement visa holder who is usually resident in Australia.

enrolled in a VET Student Loan enabled course with South Metropolitan TAFE.

- A student who has fully paid their tuition fees and/or incurred the VET Student Loan debt may apply for an appropriate refund and/or remission of the debt if they meet the policy requirements
- A student cannot apply for a refund or remission if they have completed the subject.

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- A student cannot re-enrol into a unit that they have previously withdrawn from without supplying written intent.

### 5.2. Withdrawal Before census date

Students who wish to withdraw from a VET unit of study or VET Student Loan enabled course of study must do so **in writing** by completing **CS040101 Enrolment Adjustment Form** which is available from a Customer Service Centre at one of our campus locations. This form is also downloadable from the Student Portal or online from the college website.

- Students who withdraw from a unit of study on or before the census day will not incur a VET Student Loan debt for that unit.
- Any tuition fees paid upfront for that unit will be refunded in full.

### 5.3. Withdrawal After Census Day

- If a student withdraws from a unit of study after the census day, they will incur a debt for that unit.
- However, a student may apply for their FEE-HELP balance to be re-credited if they can demonstrate that special circumstances applied.

### 5.4. Re-enrolling into the same units after withdrawing

Once withdrawn, South Metropolitan TAFE will not be able to re-enrol student/s into the same unit(s) that student(s) have previously enrolled and withdrawn from unless there is a written notification from the student/s to advise that it is their intention to re-enrol into previously withdrawn units and wish to continue to access a VET Student Loan to pay for these unit/s. This written notification must be scanned and emailed to [student.loans@smtafe.wa.edu.au](mailto:student.loans@smtafe.wa.edu.au) and TRIMMED.

### 5.5. An enrolment is cancelled prior to census dates

In the event that a student fails to provide supporting evidence or do not complete their eCAF by the college's **Administrative dateline**, the student's enrolment will be cancelled by SM TAFE's VET Student Loans Officer and the student will be advised accordingly.

### 5.6. An enrolment is cancelled after census dates

In the event that a student's enrolment(s) is/are cancelled after census Date(s) have passed, the college will issue the student with a notice outlining the reason for cancellation. The student will be given 28 days to initiate grievance procedures before the final cancellation will take effect. [*VET Student Loan Rules 2016, Part 7, Subdivision E, Sec 87*]

Reasons for cancellation may include but are not limited to failure on the part of the student to comply with administrative requirements relating to maintaining a VET Student Loan and/or failure to honour the payment option agreed upon at enrolment.

A student whose enrolment has been cancelled may have their enrolment reinstated after payment or satisfactory arrangements for payment of the debt has been reached.



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### 5.7. Special Circumstances under section 68 of the VET Student Loans Act 2016

Where withdrawals are submitted after census date, the student may apply in writing for a refund/re-credit under special circumstances, based on:

- a result of a serious illness resulting in extended absences from classes;
- injury or disability that prevented the student from completing their program;
- other exceptional circumstances.

**Note:** Pre-existing illnesses may exclude the student from being considered for a full refund.

To be considered "**special circumstances**", **all** of the following must be met:

- a) beyond the student's control; and
- b) did not make their full impact on the student until on or after, the census date;
- c) it made it impracticable for the student to complete the requirements for the unit during the period which the student undertook, or was to undertake, the unit; and

**Under section 68 of the VET Student Loans Act 2016, a student must apply in writing for re-crediting of their HELP balance within 12 months after the census day for the course or part of the course.**

An extension of the 12-month deadline may be allowed if the student was genuinely unable to apply on time - for instance, due to a serious issue that prevented them from submitting the application. Each request will be considered on a case-by-case basis but must still follow the rules set out in the legislation.

**An application for full re-credit can only be requested if all above points are met where the situation must be unusual, uncommon or abnormal.**

A ***Withdrawal – Special Circumstance form*** must be completed by the student using form **CX0300001 Application for Special Circumstances Recredit Remission - Application**

All applications must include independent supporting documentation. All documentation must include sufficient information to support the claims made.

Each application will be examined and determined on its merits. South Metropolitan TAFE will consider the student's claims, together with any independent supporting documentary evidence that substantiates these claims.

Please refer to **Tuition Fee Re-credit under Special Circumstances – for VET Student Loans Procedure CX0101**

### 5.8. Outcome Notification

- The student will receive written notification of the outcome within 28 calendar days of the application being received.
- If approved, South Metropolitan TAFE will:
  - Re-credit the relevant amount to the student's FEE-HELP balance; and/or
  - Refund any upfront tuition fees paid for the withdrawn unit(s).

### 5.9. Review and Appeal

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If a student is not satisfied with the decision made by the VET Student Loan Officer in relation to refunds, they may request a review of the decision.

The review shall be completed using form **CX030002 Application for Special Circumstances Recredit Remission – Review of Decision** and be carried out by the Review Officer independent of the original decision-maker, will assess the case.

Any such request must be submitted to the Review Officer in writing and:

- a) must be lodged within 28 days of receiving notice of the original decision, unless the Review Officer allows a longer period;
- b) must specify the reasons for making the request and include any supporting documentation; and
- c) emailed to: [student.loans@smtafe.wa.edu.au](mailto:student.loans@smtafe.wa.edu.au)

The Review Officer shall acknowledge receipt of an application for a review of the refusal to refund tuition fees paid for a VET Student Loan enabled course or unit of study in writing. The Review Officer shall:

- a) seek all relevant information from the person who made the original decision;
- b) review the case within 2 weeks and advise the student of the decision in writing giving the reasons for the reviewer's decision.

The Review Officer may:

- a) confirm the decision;
- b) vary the decision; or
- c) set the decision aside and substitute a new decision.

The applicant must be notified of the outcomes of the Review in writing within 2 weeks of receiving the review application. This notice shall also advise the applicant that if the student is still unsatisfied, they have the right to apply to the **Administrative Review Tribunal** for a review of that decision and will provide the contact details of the closest Administrative Review Tribunal Registry and the approximate costs of lodging an appeal as follows:

*If you wish to further appeal this decision you may lodge an appeal with the Administrative Review Tribunal (ART) within 28 days from this written notice. Click on this link <https://online.aat.gov.au/> to contact the ART at:*

*Administrative Review Tribunal  
Level 13, BOQ Building, 111 St Georges Terrace  
Perth WA 6000  
Telephone 1800 228 333*

## 6. DOCUMENTS SUPPORTING THIS POLICY

### 6.1. Policies

- CX03 Admissions Policy for VET Student Loans enabled courses
- CX04 Fees and Charges Policy
- CS05 Withdrawals and Refunds

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### 6.2. Procedures

- CX0101 Student Review Procedure for re-crediting a student loan balance for students on VSL
- CS0601 Enrolment – Full time profile student procedure
- CX0301 VET Student Loans Enrolment Procedure

### 6.3. Forms

- CX030101 Local interview assessment form – VSL students
- CX030102 VET Student Loans – Application Form
- CX030001 Application for Special Circumstances Recredit Remission – Application
- CX030002 Application for Special Circumstances Recredit Remission – Assessment
- CX030003 Application for Special Circumstances Recredit Remission – Review of Decision
- CS040101 Enrolment Adjustment Form

## 7. POLICY REVIEW AND COMMUNICATION

All staff will be notified of new policies and policy changes and the documents will be available on the QMS.

## 8. POLICY APPROVAL

Approved and Endorsed:

Terry Durant

Managing Director

Date: 24 July 2017

## 9. DOCUMENT HISTORY AND VERSION CONTROL

Version	Date Approved	Approved by	Brief Description
V1.0	24/07/2017	General Manager Corporate Services	Tuition Fee refund or re-credit for VET Student Loans enabled courses
V1.1	07/09/2018	Manager, Admissions	Review Date Changed, 6.3 updated
V2.0	24/10/2018	General Manager Organisational Services	Reviewed for New Student Management System – 5.5 updated
2.1	12/11/2018	Manager, Admissions	4. Key Definitions, 5. Principles, 6.3 Forms updated. Review date changed.
2.2	19/03/2019	Manager Admissions	5.2 & 5.5 updated
2.3	4 November 2019	Manager Assessments & Admissions	5.1, 2.3, 5.4 & 5.5 updated

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2.3	29 March 2021	General Manager Organisational Services and General Manager Corporate Services	Full policy set review with no changes or updates.
2.4	13/07/2021	Manager Assessments & Admissions	Policy set number changed from CS01 to CX01, policy set moved under Customer Experience.
2.5	2/05/2022	General Manager Organisational Services	Minor updates to section 5.7.1 Special Circumstances under section 68 of VET Student Loans Act 2016
2.6	4/11/2022	General Manager Organisational Services	Policy structure change – 4 Key Definitions changed to Key Terms
2.7	10/03/2023	Manager Assessments & Admissions	Full policy set review – minor updates made to policy and procedure
2.8	1/10/2024	Manager Assessments & Admissions	Policy review – minor updates made to 5.7.2 “VSL Name change from Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) to Administrative Review Tribunal (ART)”
3.0	13/02/2026	General Manager Organisational Services	Full Policy Set Review – Major update to Policy. Including 3. Policy Governance – Changes to the Registration Standards for Registered Training Organisations (SRTOs) 2025