VET FEE-HELP Policy

PL019


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Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to provide a comprehensive set of guidelines and principles for TAFE Queensland South West in the administration of the Commonwealth Government loan scheme VET FEE-HELP and its associated activities. Chapter 6 of the VET Guidelines defines student eligibility for VET FEE-HELP. Full fee-paying students are entitled to VET FEE-HELP assistance for VET Diplomas, VET Advanced Diplomas, VET Graduate Certificates and VET Graduate Diplomas, while subsidised students are entitled to access to VET FEE-HELP for only VET Diploma and VET Advanced Diploma Courses.

Background

TAFE Queensland South West has committed to implementing VET FEE-HELP as a new Tuition Fee Payment Plan option for students enrolling in identified Department of Industry approved, full Fee-for-Service, Diploma, Advanced Diploma, VET Graduate Certificate and VET Graduate Diploma programs. A suite of policies, procedures and forms have been developed to support both the application to the Department of Industry and the subsequent implementation of the administrative support required to effectively manage VET FEE-HELP services at TAFE Queensland South West.

Scope

This policy applies to all procedures and activities conducted by TAFE Queensland South West relating to VET FEE-HELP. It is relevant to all staff who are involved in administering the related procedures and activities for approved VET FEE-HELP Diploma, Advanced Diploma, VET Graduate Certificate and VET Graduate Diploma programs.

Definitions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Academic Matters</strong></th>
<th>Includes those matters which relate to student progress, assessment, curriculum and awards in a VET course of study.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Administration Date</strong></td>
<td>Under the provisions of the Act, TAFE Queensland South West may set an earlier date than the Census Date, called an ‘Administration Date’ for a unit of study. This must not disadvantage students as outlined in the fairness provisions of the Act. The Administration Date is used by TAFE Queensland South West as the deadline for which completion of online enrolment and submission of the Request for VET FEE-HELP Assistance Form is required by Customer Services. After the Administration Date the ‘late enrolment’ financial penalty/fine will apply to all persons seeking to enrol in a unit of study. The Administration Date, being the start of study for that unit of study, is also the deadline for which to make any changes to unit of study enrolments, including withdrawing from these units, without incurring a ‘Change of Enrolment’ financial penalty/fine for each unit of study affected. The Administration Date does not override the Census Date in terms of a student incurring financial liability to the Commonwealth for those units of study in to which they are enrolled. The Administration Date will be set for each unit of study in accordance with the fairness provisions of clause 18 of Schedule 1A to the Higher Education Support Act. It is the responsibility of students to ensure they are aware if TAFE Queensland South West has set an earlier Administration Date, as the deadline for enrolling in units of study.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Appropriate Officer</strong></td>
<td>Is a person whom has been appointed to be an appropriate officer of TAFE Queensland South West for the purposes of VET FEE-HELP assistance, by: (a) the General Manager of TAFE Queensland South West; or (b) a delegate of the officer of TAFE Queensland South West.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF)</strong></td>
<td>The Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) is the national policy for regulated qualifications in Australian Education and Training. It incorporates the qualifications from each Education and Training sector into a single comprehensive national qualifications framework.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>ATO</strong></td>
<td>Australian Tax Office</td>
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</table>
Census Date

TAFE Queensland South West is required to set a Census Date for each VET unit of study offered, that is available for VET FEE-HELP assistance. This is the last date that a student can submit a "Request for VET FEE-HELP assistance" form for VET units of study in the period of study for which the student wishes to obtain VET FEE-HELP assistance.

Once the Census Date has passed, the student incurs a debt to the Australian Government. The Census Date is also the last date that a student can withdraw from a VET unit of study without incurring a debt to the Commonwealth Government.

CHESSN

Students are allocated a Commonwealth Higher Education Student Support Number (CHESSN) when they use Commonwealth assistance (e.g. scholarship, Commonwealth supported place, HELP loan etc).

It is a unique identifier that will remain with them and it is allocated to them by TAFE Queensland South West when they apply for admission to a course. It helps TAFE Queensland South West and the Australian Government to provide information to the student about the Commonwealth assistance they have used. The CHESSN must be used in all communications with the Commonwealth Government concerning a person who:

- is enrolled, or seeking to enrol, in a VET unit of study with the TAFE Queensland South West and has indicated that they are seeking Commonwealth assistance under HESA for the unit of study, or is a Commonwealth supported student for the unit of study.

Students are notified of their CHESSN when they receive their first Commonwealth Assistance Notice (CAN).

This CHESSN will remain linked to the student for the remainder of their academic life for the purposes of managing:

- Higher Education Loan Program (including VET FEE-HELP); and
- Commonwealth Learning Scholarships.

The CHESSN is limited in its use to monitoring Commonwealth assistance to eligible students, including the provision of data to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) regarding FEE-HELP debts.

Students also use their CHESSN to access information on their use of Commonwealth assistance through the ‘Going to Uni’ website (www.goingtouni.gov.au).

DEEWR

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations – responsible for VET FEE-HELP data reporting.

EFTSL

EFTSL is an equivalent full-time student load that is used in data reporting and payment estimates to the Department of Industry. It is a measure of the study load, for a year, of a student undertaking a VET course of study.

- A typical full-time student would have an EFTSL of 1.0
- A part-time student undertaking part of the full-time student load would incur an EFTSL less than 1.0 ie an EFTSL for a student undertaking half of the full-time student load of 0.5.

FEE-HELP Balance

A person’s FEE-HELP balance is the amount of the FEE-HELP limit they have not used. It is the sum of the amount of FEE-HELP assistance and VET FEE-HELP assistance that is used to calculate a person’s FEE-HELP balance.

Full Fee-paying Student

A student enrolled in a VET course of study for which TAFE Queensland South West does not receive any funding from a State, Territory or the Commonwealth in relation to the student’s enrolment in that VET course of study.

HEP

Higher Education Provider

HESA

Schedule 1A, Higher Education Support Act 2003

HITS

HELP IT System is the Federal system used to administer VET FEE-HELP.
| Incidental Charges | A charge is incidental to studies if it:  
|• is for a good or service that is not essential to the VET unit or course of study;  
• is for an alternative form/s of access to a good or service that is an essential component of the VET unit or course of study but is otherwise made readily available at no additional fee by TAFE Queensland South West;  
• is for an essential good or service that the student has the choice of acquiring from a supplier other than the VET provider and is for:  
o equipment or items which become the physical property of the student and are not consumed during the VET course of study; or  
o food, transport and accommodation costs associated with the provision of field trips that form part of the VET course of study;  
o a fine or penalty, provided it is imposed principally as a disincentive and not in order to raise revenue or cover administrative costs. |
| Minimum Repayment Threshold | Students start repaying their accumulated HELP debt once their repayment income is above the minimum repayment threshold for compulsory repayment. The repayment thresholds are adjusted each year to reflect any changes to average weekly earnings. The minimum repayment threshold for the 2013-14 is $51,309. |
| Non-academic Matters | Includes complaints in relation to behavioural misconduct, non-payment of fees, matters relating to a person’s application for study, the management of personal information with a VET provider. |
| Permanent Humanitarian Visa | A visa that is, or has at any time been, defined as a permanent humanitarian visa for the purposes of the regulations made under the Migration Act 1958. |
| Request for VET FEE-HELP Assistance | A Department of Industry produced form that must be completed in order to apply for VET FEE-HELP assistance for VET units of study with a VET provider. |
| Restricted Access Arrangement | An agreement entered into between TAFE Queensland South West and an employer or industry body for the provision of a course(s) or places in a course(s) in which enrolment is limited or restricted to employees of the employer or industry body. |
| RPL | Recognition of Prior Learning – allows individuals to receive recognition and credit for knowledge and skills gained previously, that meet the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of the qualification they are seeking credit for. This can include skills gained from:  
• previous study  
• work experience  
• life experience.  
Prior to or after enrolment with TAFE Queensland South West, students may be eligible to have their prior learning recognised through gaining credit for prior studies. |
| RTO | Registered Training Organisation – registered by state and territory training authorities to deliver nationally recognised training – which means training that:  
• is recognised by all RTOs throughout Australia  
• is part of a training package that has been developed to meet the needs of a particular industry; and  
• results in a qualification that is part of the Australian Qualifications Framework.  
A RTO can be a government department or a private enterprise in which training does not have to be its core business. |
| SNR (formally AQTF) | Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations made under the National Vocational Education and Training Regulator Act 2011. These Standards are to ensure nationally consistent, high-quality training and assessment services for the clients of Australia’s vocational education and training (VET) system. SNR is part of the VET Quality Framework, which includes additional legislative instruments setting out specific requirements. |
| Student | A person who is enrolled in a VET course of study with TAFE Queensland South West. |
Tuition Assurance

Tuition Assurance is an arrangement between TAFE Queensland South West and an external party intended to protect students in the event that the VET provider ceases to provide a VET course of study in which a student is enrolled.

Under this arrangement a student is offered a choice of enrolling with another Provider in a similar VET course of study or receiving a refund of upfront payments or re-credit of their FEE-HELP balance.

VET Course of Study

A structured and integrated course of vocational education or training, usually consisting of a number of modules (VET units of study) or shorter courses, and leading to the award of a VET Diploma, Advanced Diploma, VET Graduate Certificate or VET Graduate Diploma.

VET FEE-HELP

VET FEE-HELP is a Federal Government loan scheme that assists eligible students to pay their VET tuition fees. That is, for courses at the level of VET Diploma, Advanced Diploma, VET Graduate Certificate or VET Graduate Diploma.

VET FEE-HELP Information Booklet

A Department of Industry publication that provides VET FEE-HELP information to students.

VET Provider

A registered training organisation (RTO) that is approved, under Schedule 1A of the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA) to offer VET FEE-HELP to its students.

VET Tuition Fee

Any fee payable to TAFE Queensland South West by a student enrolled or seeking to enrol in a VET course of study with TAFE Queensland South West in respect of the granting of an award of VET Diploma, Advanced Diploma, VET Graduate Certificate or VET Graduate Diploma. It does not include a fee that is:

• payable in respect of an organisation of students, or of students and other persons; or
• payable in respect of the provision to students of amenities or services that are not of an academic nature; or
• payable in respect of residential accommodation; or
• payable in respect of a special admissions test; or
• determined to be a fee of a kind that is ‘incidental’ to studies that may be undertaken with TAFE Queensland South West, as described under ‘incidental charges’.

VET Unit of Study

A subject or collection of subjects that a person may undertake with TAFE Queensland South West as part of a VET course of study.

POLICY

Eligibility

Under Schedule 1A of the Higher Education Support Act (2003), TAFE Queensland South West must comply with the following VET FEE-HELP eligibility requirements:

VET Course of Study Eligibility

To be eligible for VET FEE-HELP, a VET course of study must:

• be a program of study that results in a VET Diploma, Advanced Diploma, VET Graduate Certificate or VET Graduate Diploma; AND
• be a full fee-for-service program*

* IMPORTANT TO NOTE: Students electing to transfer from Government Subsidised to Full Fees to access VET FEE-HELP will forfeit their Government Subsidised position for all future semesters of study within their program. The decision to transfer to Full Fee is made at the time of enrolment in the respective semester/census period.

Student Eligibility

To be eligible for VET FEE-HELP assistance for a VET unit of study, the student must:

a. be an Australian citizen; or a permanent humanitarian visa holder who will be resident in Australia for the duration of the unit; and
b. have an available FEE-HELP balance; and
c. be enrolled, and have submitted their ‘Request for VET FEE-HELP Assistance’ form on or before Census Date; and
d. meet the Tax File Number requirements; and
e. undertaking a unit as part of a VET course of study.
NOTE 1: New Zealand citizens are NOT eligible for any FEE-HELP loans.

NOTE 2: Where TAFE Queensland South West determines that a student is eligible for VET FEE-HELP and this subsequently turns out not to be the case, TAFE Queensland South West will be required to repay the amount of VET FEE-HELP assistance provided to the student back to the Commonwealth.

VET Tuition Assurance Requirements
TAFE Queensland South West must comply with the requirements for VET tuition assurance set out in Schedule 1A of the HESA and the VET Guidelines.

The objective of the VET tuition assurance requirements is the protection of students enrolled under VET FEE-HELP. In the event that TAFE Queensland South West ceases to provide a VET course of study in which a student is enrolled the student is entitled to a choice of:

a. 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 (this is known as the “VET Course Assurance Option”);

OR

b. a refund of his or her up-front payments for any VET unit of study that the student commences but does not complete because TAFE Queensland South West ceases to provide the VET course of study of which the VET unit forms part (this is known as the “VET Tuition Fee Repayment Option”)

TAFE Queensland South West is required to publish and make publicly available to all enrolling students a complete and unambiguous ‘Statement of VET Tuition Assurance’. This document should explain the VET Tuition Assurance requirements and the VET Tuition Assurance scheme that is in place to meet the VET Tuition Assurance requirements for each of its VET courses of study. TAFE Queensland South West must ensure that each enrolling student is provided with clear information about where a copy of the Statement of VET Tuition Assurance may be obtained. This information will be made available on TAFE Queensland South West’s website at www.southwest.edu.au.

Quality and Accountability Requirements
TAFE Queensland South West must meet and continue to comply with all of the VET Quality and Accountability Requirements in order to maintain its approved status as a VET provider under Schedule 1A of the HESA. These requirements include:

Financial Viability
As a VET provider, TAFE Queensland South West must be financially viable and likely to remain financially viable. TAFE Queensland South West is required to provide to Department of Industry a financial statement for each annual financial reporting period in which a student has engaged with TAFE Queensland South West for VET FEE-HELP assistance.

VET Quality
As a VET provider, TAFE Queensland South West must continue to operate at an appropriate level of quality which Department of Industry is satisfied meets the requirements set out in the Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations (SNR – formally AQTF).

Fair Treatment and Equal Benefits and Opportunity
As a VET provider, TAFE Queensland South West must treat fairly all students enrolled or seeking to enrol who are or would be entitled to VET FEE-HELP assistance. TAFE Queensland South West must have open, fair and transparent procedures that are based on merit for making decisions in relation to VET FEE-HELP assistance. TAFE Queensland South West is required to publish and make publicly available its procedures that relate to fair treatment and equal benefits and opportunity. The procedures will be published on TAFE Queensland South West’s website.

Grievance and Review Procedures
As a VET provider, TAFE Queensland South West must have grievance procedures to deal with academic and non-academic complaints by students and persons seeking to enrol at TAFE Queensland South West, who are or would be entitled to VET FEE-HELP assistance. TAFE Queensland South West is required to publish and make publicly available up-to-date details of the grievance procedures. The grievance procedures required under VET FEE-HELP are in addition to other requirements or responsibilities that TAFE Queensland South West, as a RTO, may be required to have in place.

TAFE Queensland South West must also publish and make publicly available the review procedure for dealing with review of decisions relating to a person’s VET FEE-HELP assistance. The procedures will be published on TAFE Queensland South West’s website.
Compliance
As a VET provider, TAFE Queensland South West is required to provide DEEWR with any statistical or other information requested in respect of the provision of Vocational Education and Training and compliance with Schedule 1A of the HESA.

Fees & Charges
TAFE Queensland South West is required to determine the tuition fees for each VET unit of study it provides or proposes to provide to students during a particular period. TAFE Queensland South West is required to provide the DIISRTE Minister, with a schedule of fees in a form approved by the Minister and in accordance with the requirements that the Minister determines in writing.

The schedule of fees must provide sufficient information to enable a person to work out their tuition fee for each VET unit of study. The schedule must be made available to all students enrolled, or persons seeking to enrol, on request and without charge. The schedule of VET tuition fees must be published by:

- 1 April of each year for a VET unit of study with a Census Date between 1 July and 31 December; and
- 1 October of each year for a VET unit of study with a Census Date between 1 January and 30 June.

TAFE Queensland South West may only vary a VET tuition fee for a VET unit of study if:

a) the variation is:
   i. necessary because of circumstances that did not apply at the time the VET tuition fee was determined; or
   ii. to correct an administrative error; and

b) TAFE Queensland South West has advised DIISRTE, in writing, of its intention to vary the VET tuition fee at least five (5) business days before making the variation; and

c) in TAFE Queensland South West’s reasonable view, the variation:
   i. does not disadvantage a VET student enrolled, or a person seeking to enrol; and
   ii. the date is prior to the census date of the VET unit of study (the date ascertained under paragraph 27(4)(i) of Schedule 1A to the Act is the census date of the VET unit of study); or

d) in TAFE Queensland South West’s reasonable view, the variation will disadvantage a VET student enrolled, or a person seeking to enrol, in the VET unit of study affected by the variation, and the date is more than two months before the earlier of:
   i. the date of commencement of the VET unit of study; and
   ii. the last date that a person can enrol in the VET unit of study without incurring a late enrolment fee.

NOTE: Without limiting (c) and (d) above, a VET student or person will be disadvantaged by a variation that increases the VET tuition fee.

Where the variation does disadvantage a student enrolled or a person seeking to enrol and is made within two months of the earlier of the dates ascertained in accordance with paragraph (d) above, the variation must be approved by the Department of Industry Minister in writing.

TAFE Queensland South West must publish the replacement schedule no later than ten (10) business days after making the variation. Where the DIISRTE Minister has approved a variation to a VET tuition fee, the VET provider must publish the replacement schedule no later than ten (10) business days after the day the DIISRTE Minister gives approval for the variation.

Dates
TAFE Queensland South West Census, Enrolment and Withdrawal Dates are aligned with:

- the first period of a year which commences on 1 January and ends on 30 June of the year; and
- the second period of a year which commences on 1 July and ends on 31 December of the year.

Census Dates & EFTSL Values
TAFE Queensland South West will, for each VET unit of study that it provides or proposes to provide during the first or second period of the year, determine:

- a particular date to be the Census Date for the unit; and
- the EFTSL value for the unit.

The Census Date must occur not less than 20% of the way through the period during which the unit is undertaken.
Where a published Census Date is available only through the Internet or in other electronic format, TAFE Queensland South West must also provide students with access to an information system which students can use to access the information.

For a VET unit of study which is being undertaken through a ‘restricted access arrangement’, TAFE Queensland South West must inform and make available to each student within five days of commencement of the unit, the Census Date.

TAFE Queensland South West may only vary a published census date if:

a) the variation is:
   i. necessary because of circumstances that did not apply at the time the census date was determined; or
   ii. to correct an administrative error; and

d) in TAFE Queensland South West’s reasonable view, the variation will disadvantage a student enrolled, or a person seeking to enrol, in the VET unit of study affected by the variation, and the date is more than two months before the earlier of:
   i. the date of commencement of the VET unit of study; and
   ii. the last date that a person can enrol in the VET unit of study without incurring a late enrolment fee.

Without limiting paragraphs (c) and (d) above, a student or person will be disadvantaged by a variation that brings the published census date forward in time.

Where the variation does disadvantage a student enrolled or a person seeking to enrol and is made within two months of the earlier of the dates ascertained in accordance with paragraph (d) above, the variation must be approved by the DIISRTE Minister in writing.

Where the published census date has been varied, TAFE Queensland South West must publish, via the internet site, the varied census date no later than ten (10) business days after making the variation. As the information will only be available to students via the internet, TAFE Queensland South West must also provide access to an information system (e.g. direct students to the Library) which the student can use to access the information.

Where the Minister has approved a variation to a published census date (ie the variation does disadvantage a student enrolled or a person seeking to enrol), TAFE Queensland South West must publish the varied census date no later than ten (10) business days after the day the Minister gives approval for the variation.

Enrolment Dates

Students must be enrolled prior to Start of Study for the relevant semester/census period. TAFE Queensland South West cannot guarantee a position in a program unless the student is enrolled prior to its start date.

Please note: Programs may be cancelled due to insufficient enrolments.

Without limiting paragraphs (c) and (d) above, a student or person will be disadvantaged by a variation that brings the published census date forward in time.

Where the variation does disadvantage a student enrolled or a person seeking to enrol and is made within two months of the earlier of the dates ascertained in accordance with paragraph (d) above, the variation must be approved by the DIISRTE Minister in writing.

Where the published census date has been varied, TAFE Queensland South West must publish, via the internet site, the varied census date no later than ten (10) business days after making the variation. As the information will only be available to students via the internet, TAFE Queensland South West must also provide access to an information system (e.g. direct students to the Library) which the student can use to access the information.

Where the Minister has approved a variation to a published census date (ie the variation does disadvantage a student enrolled or a person seeking to enrol), TAFE Queensland South West must publish the varied census date no later than ten (10) business days after the day the Minister gives approval for the variation.

Students must be enrolled prior to Start of Study for the relevant semester/census period. TAFE Queensland South West cannot guarantee a position in a program unless the student is enrolled prior to its start date.

Please note: Programs may be cancelled due to insufficient enrolments.
Withdrawal Dates
The withdrawal dates set by TAFE Queensland South West apply in the following circumstances when:-

A student may at any time during a semester, cancel enrolment for the semester or amend it by withdrawing from one or more units of study. However, the cancellation of enrolment may be subject to academic penalty and/or financial penalty as follows:

Withdrawal from unit/s of study or change of enrolment prior to the Administration Date:
  a. no academic penalty; and
  b. no financial penalty/fine.

Withdrawal from unit/s of study or change of enrolment after the Administration Date but before the Census Date:
  a. no academic penalty
  b. financial penalty/fine.

Withdrawal from unit/s of study or change of enrolment after the Census Date but prior to the Withdrawal Date (COS):
  a. no academic penalty;
  b. full financial liability to the Commonwealth Government.

Withdrawal from unit/s of study or change of enrolment after the Census Date and after the Withdrawal Date (COS):
  a. academic penalty;
  b. full financial liability to the Commonwealth Government.

Publication of Census and Withdrawal Dates
TAFE Queensland South West is required to publish Census, Administration and Withdrawal Dates for each VET unit of study, with the exception of 'restricted access arrangements' by:

- 1 April for a VET unit of study with a Census Date between 1 July – 31 December; and
- 1 October for a VET unit of study with a Census Date between 1 January - 30 June.

FEE-HELP Balances
It is the responsibility of students and persons seeking to enrol at TAFE Queensland South West to be aware of their current FEE-HELP balance and to advise TAFE Queensland South West if they do not have sufficient FEE-HELP balance to cover their tuition fee/s.

If a student enrolls in a VET unit/s of study and the tuition fee/s exceed the student’s FEE-HELP balance, the student will receive VET FEE-HELP assistance only for an amount equal to the student’s current FEE-HELP balance to cover their tuition fee/s. The student will be required to pay the remainder of their tuition fees direct to TAFE Queensland South West immediately.

Students who are approaching the limit of their FEE-HELP balance, and who are enrolled with more than one provider must notify each provider of how much VET FEE-HELP assistance they wish to receive for their units.

In cases where students are enrolled in more than one unit with multiple providers on the same Census Date, and fail to notify their providers that they do not have enough FEE-HELP balance to cover all units, VET FEE-HELP assistance will be determined according to the VITS order of precedence. Should a student have an insufficient FEE-HELP balance to cover a unit of study, DEEWR will notify TAFE Queensland South West via an exception report. TAFE Queensland South West will be accountable for recovering any outstanding tuition fees from students. The Commonwealth is only liable to pay up to the amount of the student’s FEE-HELP balance.

Re-crediting FEE-HELP Balances
Students who withdraw from their studies after the Census Date or who do not complete the requirements for their VET unit/s of study can apply, in special circumstances, to have their FEE-HELP balance re-credited, or upfront payments refunded. TAFE Queensland South West will advise the student when they withdraw from studies that they may apply, in writing to TAFE Queensland South West, to re-credit their FEE-HELP balance and for a remission of their VET FEE-HELP debt. A student cannot apply if they have successfully completed the VET unit/s of study.

TAFE Queensland South West must, where it is satisfied that special circumstances apply, either;

  - re-credit a student’s FEE-HELP balance with an amount equal to the VET FEE-HELP assistance that the student received for the VET unit/s of study,
  - and/or refund any upfront payments made by the student prior to the Census Date.
If a student’s FEE-HELP balance is re-credited, any VET FEE-HELP debt they acquired for the VET unit/s of study must be remitted and TAFE Queensland South West must repay any amounts of VET FEE-HELP assistance for the VET unit/s of study to the Commonwealth.

Special Circumstances
TAFE Queensland South West must re-credit or remit if TAFE Queensland South West is satisfied that ‘special circumstances’ apply to the student that were:

- beyond the person’s control;
- did not make their full impact on the person until on, or after, the Census Date; and
- made it impracticable for the person to complete the requirements for the VET unit/s of study in the period during which the person undertook, or was to undertake, the VET unit/s of study.

Special circumstances do not include, for example:

- lack of knowledge or understanding of requirements for VET FEE-HELP assistance; or
- a person’s incapacity to repay a HELP debt, as repayments are income contingent and the person can apply for a deferral of a compulsory repayment in certain circumstances.

Application Period
A student’s application to re-credit FEE-HELP balance must be made, in writing, within 12 months of the Withdrawal Date, or, if the student has not withdrawn, within 12 months of the end of the period of study in which the unit/s of study was, or was to be, undertaken. TAFE Queensland South West may waive the application period on the grounds that it would not be, or was not, possible for the application to be made before the end of that period.

Commonwealth Assistance Notice (CAN)
TAFE Queensland South West will issue each student requesting VET FEE-HELP assistance with a Commonwealth Assistance Notice (CAN). Note: This will be issued regardless of whether the student has made a full up-front payment of their tuition fees and therefore has not incurred a VET FEE-HELP debt on that Census Date.

A CAN must be supplied within twenty-eight days of the earliest Census Date indicated in the notice.

If, after issuing a CAN to a student, TAFE Queensland South West is satisfied that information in the notice is not, or has ceased to be, correct, TAFE Queensland South West will issue a further CAN to the student setting out the correct information.

A student who receives a CAN from TAFE Queensland South West may request in writing for the notice to be corrected if the student considers that information in the notice is not, or has ceased to be, correct. This request must be given to an appropriate officer of TAFE Queensland South West, within fourteen days after the day the original CAN was given.

The request must specify the information in the CAN that the student considers is incorrect and the reasons the student has for considering that it is incorrect. The making of such a request does not affect the liability or entitlement of the student.

Upon receipt of such a request TAFE Queensland South West will, as soon as practicable:

- determine the matter to which the request relates; and
- notify the student in writing of the determination; and
- if TAFE Queensland South West determines that the information in the CAN was not, or has ceased to be, correct they will amend and issue a further CAN.

Electronic Communications
Where a student is required to give a notice or other documentation to TAFE Queensland South West and that information is given by way of facsimile, email, web-based communication or any other form of electronic communications, the information system used for providing that information must be accessible by the student. TAFE Queensland South West is required to:

- inform students, via direct communication or via publications, that the communication in question will occur by electronic means using the information system;
- give students the authority to use the information system.

As well as being accessible by students, the information system must be:

- secure, so that students’ information can be accessed only by persons authorised by TAFE Queensland South West;
- able to store a notice, document or information so that it is readily accessible by the student and can be made available for subsequent reference;
accessible in respect of a request for Commonwealth assistance where, in the case of a student submitting an electronic request for Commonwealth assistance:

a. the student must use a unique identifier to identify himself or herself and to indicate his or her approval of the conditions and requirements outlined in the request for Commonwealth assistance; and

b. the system must automatically generate a date field on the request; and

c. able to generate a printable receipt for the student.

TAFE Queensland South West is accountable for ensuring that back-up measures are in place to cater for situations where computer malfunctions occur. In such cases, if a student is unable to complete an electronic form, staff must instruct the student to complete a paper form.

Tax File Numbers (TFN)
A student must meet certain tax file number (TFN) requirements in order to be eligible for VET FEE-HELP assistance. These include the requirement for a student to provide their TFN when completing and signing a ‘Request for VET FEE-HELP Assistance’ form.

- If a student applies for a TFN less than 1 month before the relevant census date, the student should request the ATO to issue them with a Certificate of Application for a TFN.
- If a student has not received their TFN within 10 days before the census date, the student should provide this certificate to TAFE Queensland South West as proof of having applied.
- The student must quote their TFN within 21 days from the day the ATO issues the student a Tax File Number Advice [HESA Schedule 1A cl82(a)].
- If a student chooses not to provide their TFN, they will not be entitled to VET FEE-HELP.
- TAFE Queensland South West uses students’ TFNs to provide advice to the ATO regarding the amount of each student’s loan.
- If a student does not provide their TFN on the Request for VET FEE-HELP Assistance form, TAFE Queensland South West must notify the student in writing within seven (7) days of receiving the form or on or before the census date ( whichever is earlier) that the student has not provided a valid TFN. The written advice must explain how the student can meet the TFN requirements by either providing a TFN or a Certificate of Application for a TFN.

Personal Information
TAFE Queensland South West is accountable for ensuring that students’ information can only be accessed by persons authorised by TAFE Queensland South West to access that information. Information provided by students, in particular TFNs, must be in a secure database. The storage and security of TFNs must comply with the Privacy Commissioner’s Tax File Number Guidelines 1992.

RESPONSIBILITIES
The VET Provider (TAFE Queensland South West)
All staff are responsible for adhering to the guidelines within this policy when dealing with matters relating to VET FEE-HELP.

TAFE Queensland South West is responsible for making the Request for VET FEE-HELP Assistance application forms and the VET FEE-HELP information booklet available to students and potential students. The Request for VET FEE-HELP Assistance form is required once for each VET course of study the student is enrolled in. Where students are enrolling in a dual award forms must be completed for both courses of study.

TAFE Queensland South West is responsible for collecting and securely storing student information including Tax File Numbers (TFN) so that VET FEE-HELP debts can be properly notified to the Australian Tax Office (ATO).

Revenue Coordinator
The Revenue Coordinator is responsible for:

- overall coordination of VET FEE-HELP activities at TAFE Queensland South West;
- making available information to students and potential students who enquire about VET FEE-HELP;
- providing advice and assistance to students in the completion and submission of Requests for VET FEE-HELP Assistance forms;
- verifying information supplied on students’ Requests for VET FEE-HELP Assistance forms, and processing these forms upon receipt from students;
- maintaining records of any hard copies of the Request for VET FEE-HELP Assistance forms;
- ensuring that legislative requirements are met, and reporting occurs according to the specified timeframes;
- coordination and assessment of student review requirements including re-crediting and refund requests.
Students and Potential Students of TAFE Queensland South West

Students and potential students of TAFE Queensland South West are responsible for:

- completing and submitting a Request for VET FEE-HELP Assistance form to TAFE Queensland South West prior to the Census Date for each VET unit of study for which they wish to apply for VET FEE-HELP assistance;
- supplying their tax file number to TAFE Queensland South West at the time of submitting a Request for VET FEE-HELP Assistance form, or supplying a Certificate of Application for a Tax File Number from the Australian Tax Office;
- maintaining an awareness of their current FEE-HELP balance and advising TAFE Queensland South West if they do not have sufficient FEE-HELP balance to cover their tuition fee/s and making alternative arrangements for payment to ensure continuance in the course of study;
- maintaining an awareness of important dates relevant for their studies and informing themselves of TAFE Queensland South West’s Policy as it relates to VET FEE-HELP;
- supplying proof of Australian citizenship or permanent humanitarian visa at time of application for VET FEE-HELP assistance (must be certified JP copy).

DOCUMENTATION

VET FEE-HELP Tuition Assurance Statement
VET FEE-HELP Equity and Fair Treatment Policy
VET FEE-HELP Academic Grievance Appeals Policy
VET FEE-HELP Academic Grievance Appeals Procedure
VET FEE-HELP Academic Grievance Appeals Form
VET FEE-HELP Non-Academic Grievance Appeals Policy
VET FEE-HELP Non-Academic Grievance Appeals Procedure
VET FEE-HELP Non-Academic Grievance Appeals Form
VET FEE-HELP Review and Re-Crediting Policy
VET FEE-HELP Review and Re-Crediting Procedure
VET FEE-HELP Application to Re-credit FEE-HELP Balance Form
VET FEE-HELP Assessment of Application to Re-credit FEE-HELP Balance Form
VET FEE-HELP Application to Review a Re-credit Decision Form
VET FEE-HELP Tuition Fee Refund Policy
VET FEE-HELP Personal Information Management Policy

COMPLIANCE REFERENCES

This policy operates within the Commonwealth Government’s legislation and policy framework regarding VET FEE-HELP, including:

- Higher Education Support Act 2003 – Schedule 1A
- VET FEE-HELP Information Handbook (DIISRTE)
- Electronic Transactions Act 1999
- Privacy Commissioner’s Tax File Number Guidelines 1992

POLICY APPROVAL

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<tr>
<th>Owned By:</th>
<th>Sarah Byers</th>
<th>Date: 02/05/2014</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Position:</td>
<td>Revenue Coordinator</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authorised by:</td>
<td>Trevor Schwenke</td>
<td>Date: 02/05/2014</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Position</td>
<td>General Manager</td>
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