



Student Review Procedures VET Tuition Fee Refund Policy including Re-Crediting of VET FEE-HELP Balance Policy

Policy

It is the policy of the AIE that all applicable refunds for tuition fees are paid to students who pay tuition fees directly to AIE and who cancel their enrolment, withdraw from any AIE program or unit or defer or take Leave of Absence. This policy also applies to students who have withdrawn from study after the census date in each Unit of Study due to special circumstances and may be entitled to having their tuition fees refunded or be granted a re-credit of their VET FEE-HELP balance.

AIE undertakes the following procedures in regards to tuition fee refunds for local students to ensure that it complies with the fairness requirements in relation to review procedures for VET FEE-HELP as set out in the Higher Education Support Act 2003 and the requirements of the VET Provider Guidelines.

Publication

These procedures are to be published for students on the AIE website and in the Student Handbook to ensure current and prospective students have up to date and accurate information publicly available to them.

Responsible Officers

Heads of School and Campus Administration Managers are the designated VET FEE-HELP Officers of AIE. They are responsible for the assessment of a student's request for re-crediting VET FEE-HELP due to special circumstances and for the initial decision regarding the request.

The Chief Executive Officer of AIE is the designated review officer of any decisions relating to the re-crediting of a VET FEE-HELP balance.

Procedures

1. Withdrawal or deferment after enrolment and prior to the commencement of the academic year, or prior to or on the CENSUS date.
 - a. Students in these circumstances do not incur a VET FEE-HELP debt.
 - b. Students who have paid their fees up-front are entitled to a refund.
2. Withdrawal or deferment after the CENSUS date.
 - a. Students in these circumstances will incur a VET FEE-HELP debt.
 - b. Students who have paid their fees up-front will not be entitled to a refund.
3. Withdrawal or deferment after the CENSUS date – special circumstances.

A student may apply after the census date to have their VET FEE-HELP balance re-credited or a refund of fees paid up-front if the student has been unable to complete the requirements of a unit of study if;

- a. The student has been unable to complete the requirements of the units of study; AND
- b. The student believes that this was due to special circumstances; AND
- c. The student applies to the AIE for a tuition fee refund or to re-credit their VET FEE-HELP debt.

Special Circumstances

AIE will only consider applications for re-crediting VET FEE-HELP after the census date where there are special circumstances.

To assist students with making their application the following definitions and guidelines are to be applied in determining special circumstances.

1. Special circumstances which would make it impracticable for the person to complete the requirements for the unit of study may include:
 - _ medical circumstances;
 - _ family circumstances;
 - _ personal circumstances;
 - _ employment related circumstances;
 - _ course related circumstances.
2. Special circumstances need to be:
 - _ beyond a person's control; AND
 - _ do not make their full impact until on or after the census date for the unit of study in question; AND
 - _ make it impracticable for a person to complete the requirements for
 - _ the unit of study.
3. For circumstances to be beyond a person's control, the situation should be that which a reasonable person would consider is not due to the person's action or inaction, either direct or indirect, and for which the person is not responsible.
4. AIE needs to be satisfied that a person's circumstances did not make their full impact on the person until on or after the census date for a unit of study if the person's circumstances occur:
 - _ before the census date but worsen after that day; or
 - _ before the census date, but the full effect of magnitude does not
 - _ become apparent until on or after that day; or
 - _ on or after the census date.
5. The situation must be unusual, uncommon or abnormal to be considered special circumstances.

Re-Credit of VET FEE-HELP Balance

1. In requesting a re-credit of the VET FEE-HELP balance, a student must provide relevant and appropriate evidence that they are unable to continue their study in the unit due to special circumstances. Students can obtain further information about special circumstances from the VET FEE-HELP Officer.
2. A student must apply in writing for withdrawal and re-crediting of their VET FEE-HELP balance within 12 months of the specified completion date of the unit or units of study.
3. Once a request to re-credit a person's VET FEE-HELP balance is approved, a student's VET FEE-HELP debt is removed for the relevant unit/s studied.

4. AIE will refund to the Commonwealth the amount of VET FEE-HELP paid to the College on behalf of the student, if the student's request is successful.
5. AIE will notify DEEWR of variation if the student's request is successful.
6. AIE has the discretion to disallow an application for withdrawing from a unit or units of study, after the census date if it considers the student's request is not based on special circumstances. If it believes there is not sufficient and relevant evidence or if it believes the student's request does not fall within the relevant timeframes for the application and processing of requests for re-crediting of VET FEE-HELP balances.
7. AIE's VET FEE-HELP Officer will consider the student's application as soon as practicable. Applications will be considered within 15 working days. Applicants will be notified of the decision in writing, within a further 15 working days.

Review of Decision

1. If the original decision by the VET FEE-HELP Officer is not to refund the fees or re-credit an applicant's VET FEE-HELP balance, the applicant may apply in writing for a review of the original decision.
2. Reviews are conducted by AIE's Chief Executive Officer.
3. The written application for a review must be received by the CEO within 28 days of the applicant receiving notice of the original decision and must state the reasons why they are applying for a review.
4. The CEO must acknowledge receipt of an application for review of a decision in writing and inform the applicant that, if the CEO has not advised the applicant of a decision within 45 days of receiving the application for review, the CEO is taken to have confirmed the original decision.
5. The CEO's options are:
 - a. To confirm the decision
 - b. To vary the decision; or
 - c. To set aside the decision and deliver a new decision
6. The CEO will review the original decision and inform the applicant in writing of the decision and the CEO's reasons for making the decision within 45 days.
7. The CEO must advise the applicant of their right to appeal to the Administration Appeals Tribunal (AAT) for a review of the CEO's decision if the applicant is unsatisfied with the outcome. The advice will include contact details of the AAT and indicative costs of lodging an application with the Tribunal.

Reconsideration by the Administration Appeals Tribunal

Should AIE decline to refund an applicant's tuition fees or re-credit an applicant's VET FEE-HELP balance, the applicant may appeal to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal for a review of the decision.

The AIE CEO must provide the applicant with the contact details and address of the nearest AAT Registry and an approximate cost of lodging an appeal with the AAT.