

SOUTHERN SCHOOL OF NATURAL THERAPIES

FEE-HELP STUDENT REVIEW POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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Related References

- Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA)
- Provider Handbook
- FEE-HELP Guidelines, issued by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR)

Related Policies

- FEE-HELP Policy and Procedures
- FEE-HELP Withdrawal & Refund Policy and Procedures
- Fairness, Review, Equal Benefits and Opportunities Policy and Procedures
- Grievances, Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedures (Academic and Non-Academic)
- Privacy Statement and Policy

Purpose

This procedure describes how SSNT ensures compliance with guidelines as a Higher Education Provider (HEP) of FEE-HELP. It describes procedures for the *requirements for review of decisions relating to FEE-HELP assistance* and Personal Information Procedures. The SSNT complies with requirements of the Higher Education Support Act (HESA) 2003.

Scope of Procedure

This procedure applies to persons enrolled at the SSNT who are eligible or who could be eligible for FEE-HELP assistance under the HESA. It also applies to those employed or contracted to SSNT in the school's student/administrative services.

Responsible Authority

The Principal is responsible for the school's compliance with these requirements.

The SSNT Manager of Student Services, Ms Cheryl Richter, is responsible for FEE-HELP decisions.

The Principal, Mr Colin Thomson is the person responsible to review a decision concerning FEE-HELP.

Definitions

HELP	- Higher Education Loan Program
FEE-HELP	- An income contingent loan for eligible full fee paying students under HELP
HEP	- Higher Education Provider
Review	- Review of a decision to not re-credit or remit a FEE-HELP balance

Availability of the Procedures

These procedures are available under Student Centre on the SSNT website at www.southernschool.com and a hard copy is also available at the Student Services/Administration and in the library.

Policy

1. Requirements for Decisions & Review of Decisions

1.1 FEE-HELP General Information

Applications for FEE-HELP should be made on the appropriate application form by commencement of the semester and before the Census Date. FEE-HELP information is available at the SSNT Student Services /Administration reception.

A student has the right to have their FEE-HELP balance re-credited if they withdraw on or prior to the Census Date. The student will not then incur a FEE-HELP debt for the withdrawn unit/s, however they will still be liable for standard withdrawal fees to be paid direct to SSNT.

At SSNT, the **Census Date** is the date set 20% into a semester (generally four weeks). After this date, there is no refund available for fees paid or for removing a FEE-HELP debt if a student has not withdrawn prior to this date. i.e. *You are still liable for a FEE-HELP debt if you have not withdrawn prior to the SSNT's Census date.*

If a student fails a unit, s/he still has to pay the debt for that unit. It does not matter whether or not s/he attended any classes.

It is important to note that if you have successfully completed a unit of study, you are not eligible to apply to have your FEE-HELP balance re-credited or have your debt removed for that unit.

The SSNT treats students fairly with equal benefits and opportunities.

With regard to fees paid by students, it should be noted that the SSNT protects students' fees paid in advance. The SSNT is a member of the **Australian Council of Private Education and Training (ACPET)** and is a member of its **Australian Student Tuition Assurance Scheme (ASTAS)** for fee protection purposes.

1.2 Decisions Concerning FEE-HELP

The SSNT has appointed the **Manager-Student Services, Ms Cheryl Richter**, as the person responsible for decisions concerning FEE-HELP.

Any requests for a change concerning a FEE-HELP debt must be made in writing, clearly stating the reasons for the requested change and including all relevant documentation. It should be directed to the:

**Manager-Student Services
25 Victoria St
Fitzroy Vic 3065**

If a FEE-HELP balance for a unit of study is re-credited, any FEE-HELP debt a student has incurred for that unit will automatically be removed.

Time limits for applying

An application must be made to the SSNT within twelve months after the withdrawal date, which is aligned with the Census Date. If you have not withdrawn your enrolment, you must make your application to SSNT within 12 months of the last day of the unit(s) in which you were enrolled. The SSNT may waive the time limit for making your application to have your FEE-HELP balance re-credited and your FEE-HELP debt removed if it is satisfied that it was not possible for you to apply within the time limit.

1.3 FEE-HELP Student Review of a Decision

If not satisfied with a decision to not re-credit their FEE-HELP balance, a student has the right to apply for a review of that decision. Applications for a review should be made in writing to SSNT.

The time limit for applying for a review of a decision is 28 days from the day on which you first received notice of the decision.

1.4 Requesting a review of a decision

Students may apply in writing to review a decision and request to re-credit their FEE-HELP balance and remove their FEE-HELP debt if they have:

- withdrawn their enrolment in a unit of study after the Census Date due to special documented circumstances, or
- they did not complete their requirements for a unit of study due to special documented circumstances.

Special Circumstances are circumstances that:

- are specific and beyond their control,
- are clearly documented,
- did not make the full impact until after the Census date of the unit of study; and
- made it impracticable to complete the unit of study requirements.

The SSNT has student review procedures for reconsidering such decisions.(See 2.2 below)

2. Application Procedures for Students

2.1 Application to Re-credit a Fee-Help Balance

An application *requesting the re-crediting of a FEE-HELP balance* must be made to the SSNT within 12 months of the withdrawal date, or if you have not withdrawn, within 12 months of the end of the period of study in which the unit was, or was to be, undertaken.

The application for re-crediting the FEE-HELP balance must include details of the:

- units of study for which you are seeking to have your FEE-HELP balance re-credited;
- special circumstances that you believe made it impossible for you to complete those units (eg. sudden onset of severe illness);
- documentary evidence (eg. medical certificate).

The SSNT will consider an application within 10 working days of its receipt. i.e. It will consider a written request to re-credit a student's FEE-HELP balance and remove the FEE-HELP debt in accordance with the requirements of the Higher Education Support Act 2003.

2.2 Application to Review a Decision

The SSNT has the following student review procedures for reconsidering a decision.

If a student is not satisfied with the decision made by SSNT, s/he may apply within 28 days of the receipt of the original decision for a *review of the decision*.

It should be noted that the SSNT ensures that its review officer:

- (a) does not review a decision that the review officer was involved in making; and
- (b) in reviewing a decision of the SSNT, occupies a position that is senior to that occupied by any person involved in making the original decision.

The Principal, Mr Colin Thomson, or his delegate, will be the Review Officer for the purpose of reviewing a decision made by the SSNT relating to assistance under the requirements of the Higher Education Support Act (HESA).

Applications for a review of a decision should be made in writing and must state fully the reasons for applying for the review. A review application should be addressed to the:

**Principal, Southern School of Natural Therapies
21 Victoria St
Fitzroy 3065**

It can also be lodged at the Student Services/ Administration reception on the first floor, building 25.

The SSNT acknowledges receipt of an application for review of a decision in writing within 5 working days and informs the applicant that:

- if the reviewer has not advised the applicant of a decision within 45 days of receiving the application for review, the reviewer is taken to have confirmed the original decision. This should be confirmed through the Student Services/ Administration.
- A right to a further review may be made to the **Administrative Appeals Tribunal** (Refer to 2.3 below).

2.3 External Review

*If not satisfied with the review decision, applicants have the right to apply to the **Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT)** for a review of the reviewable decision that has been confirmed, varied or set aside under the Act.*

The closest office in Melbourne for lodging an appeal is:

Administrative Appeals Tribunal (Commonwealth)
40 City Rd
South Melbourne
Tel: 03 - 9282 8444; Fax: 03 -9282 8480

Costs

The AAT charges a filing cost, which is currently set at \$682 (unless the student is eligible for an exemption) plus other personal costs, as required.

Students are advised to contact the AAT for current costs. Information about the contact details for the AAT, application procedures and application fees will be included in the notice of the decision or they can be found at www.aat.gov.au .

3. Procedures Relating to Personal Information

- (1) The SSNT complies with the information privacy principles set out in section 14 of the *Privacy Act 1988* (C'wth) in respect of collecting personal information obtained for FEE-HELP purposes.
- (2) The SSNT has procedures under which a student enrolled may apply for, and receive, a copy of personal information that the SSNT holds in relation to that student.

Refer to the SSNT's Privacy Policy on the website.

3.1 Personal information Procedures

You can contact the Student Services for information concerning your personal data. Under the Privacy Policy, no information can be given to a third party without specific instruction in writing signed by you. Information will be required as specified by the Department of Education Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) for the

purposes of providing FEE-HELP assistance and repayment of HELP loans. This information will be collected in accordance with the Information Privacy Principles (IPP). Records are stored securely are accurate, current and not misleading.

You can access your own records free of charge by applying at the Student Services/Administration reception. Corrections or amendments to the information should be noted on the record.

The personal information is only to be used for the purposes for which it was collected, or for other purposes where expressly allowed. Personal information is only disclosed in accordance with the Privacy Policy and Principles.

Refer to the *SSNT Privacy Policy* available on the website and at the student services office.

<http://www.southernschool.com/html/student-centre/policies-procedure/index.php>

Any specific queries should be addressed to the Manager, Student Services, Ms Cheryl Richter, email: crichter@ssnt.com.au or Tel 03 9415 3333.