

SOUTHERN SCHOOL OF NATURAL THERAPIES

VET FEE-HELP STUDENT REVIEW POLICY AND PROCEDURES

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Related References

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

Related Standards

- AQTF 2007 *Condition of Registration 3*, Compliance with Legislation and AQTF 2007 *Standards 1.1, 2.2, 2.4, 2.6 and 3.1*.

Also refer to other policies on the website:

- VET FEE-HELP Policy and Procedures
- VET 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 Registered Training Organisation (RTO) and as a provider of VET FEE-HELP. It describes procedures for the *requirements for review of decisions relating to VET FEE-HELP assistance and also Personal Information Procedures*.

Scope of Procedure

This procedure applies to persons enrolled or seeking to enroll at the SSNT who are eligible or who could be eligible for VET FEE-HELP assistance under Part 2 of Schedule 1A of the Act. It also applies to those employed or contracted to SSNT in the school's student/administrative services. The SSNT is a VET provider and it complies with requirements of section 6.15 of the VET FEE-HELP Guidelines and Division 16 of Schedule 1A of the Higher Education Support Act 2003.

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 VET FEE-HELP decisions.

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

Definitions

- HELP - Higher Education Loan Program
VET FEE-HELP - An income contingent loan for eligible full fee paying VET students under HELP.
VET - Vocational Education and Training

Availability of the Procedures

These procedures are publicly available on the SSNT website under Student Centre <http://www.southernschool.com/html/student-centre/policies-procedure/index.php> /VET and a hard copy is also available at the Student Services Administration and in the library. SSNT also provides content for notifications to students.

Policy

When an enrolled student withdraws from a subject/unit or course of study *on or before the Census Date* the SSNT will automatically re-credit the student's FEE-HELP balance. Withdrawals after this date will incur the VET FEE-HELP debt. However, students can apply to the SSNT for a review of the decision. (Refer to section 1 below.)

1. Requirements For Review Of Decisions

1.1 VET FEE-HELP General Information

Applications for VET FEE-HELP should be made at enrolment on the appropriate application form. Information is available at the SSNT Student Services, administration reception.

The Census Date is the date set 20% into a semester, (generally four weeks after commencement) after which time there is no refund available for fees paid. i.e. a VET FEE-HELP debt cannot be removed, if a student has not withdrawn on or prior to the Census date.

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

Any requests for a change must be made in writing, clearly stating the reasons for the requested change and including all relevant documentation. This should be directed to the:

Manager-Student Services
Southern School of Natural Therapies
Level 1, 25 Victoria St,
Fitzroy Vic 3065

1.2 VET FEE-HELP Student Review

A student has the right to apply for a review of a decision by the SSNT to not re-credit or remit their FEE-HELP balance where there are special circumstances concerning a late withdrawal. The SSNT student review procedures are available for reconsidering such decisions and students can submit a valid request with the required details for the review. (Refer to section 2 below.)

The SSNT treats students fairly with equal benefits and opportunities.

The SSNT protects students' fees paid in advance. The SSNT is a member of the Australian Council for Private Education and Training (ACPET) and is a member of its Australian Student Tuition Assurance Scheme (ASTAS) for fee protection purposes.

Also refer to the SSNT's *Fair Treatment, Equal Benefits and Opportunities Policy and Procedure* available on the website:

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

1.3 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 VET FEE-HELP debt if they have:

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

Special Circumstances are circumstances that:

- are beyond the student's control, (being unusual, uncommon or abnormal);
- did not make the full impact until after the Census date of the unit/s of study; and
- made it impracticable to complete the unit/s of study requirements in the required period.

A student's VET FEE-HELP debt in relation to a VET unit of study is taken to be remitted if the student's FEE-HELP balance is re-credited.

A student cannot apply for a re-credit or a remission if they have successfully completed the unit. A student who receives a fail grade is considered not to have successfully completed the requirements of the unit.

2. Application Procedure for Students

An application *requesting the re-crediting of a FEE-HELP balance* must be made in writing 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 VET unit of study was, or was to be, undertaken. If you have been allowed to defer completion of a unit of study, the 12 month period applies from the end of the extension period. The SSNT may waive this requirement if it is satisfied that the application cannot be made within the time limits.

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

- VET units of study for which you are seeking to have your FEE-HELP balance re-credited;
- special circumstances that you believe made it impracticable for you to complete those units.

Additional independent supporting documentation should be included (such as a letter from your medical practitioner or counselor, to support your claims.) Each application will be examined and determined on its merits.

The SSNT will consider an application within 10 working days of its receipt. It will consider a request to re-credit your FEE-HELP balance and remove your VET FEE-HELP debt in accordance with the requirements of Schedule 1A of the Higher Education Support Act 2003.

2.1 Review of a Decision

If you are not satisfied with the decision made by SSNT, you 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:

- does not review a decision that the review officer was involved in making; and
- 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 must state fully the reasons for applying for the review and should be sent in writing to:

The Principal
Southern School of Natural Therapies
25 Victoria St
Fitzroy Vic 3065.

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

- the student will be notified in writing of the reviewer's decision and the reasons for the making the decision (by confirming the decision, varying the decision or substituting a new decision)
- 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 student has a right to a further review by an external body. An application may be made to the **Administrative Appeals Tribunal** (see 2.2 below).

2.2 External Review

Applicants have the right to apply to the **Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT)** for a review of the reviewable VET decision that has been confirmed, varied or set aside under clauses 95 or 96 of Schedule 1A of the Act.

The closest office in Melbourne for lodging an appeal with the AAT is:

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

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.

3. Procedures relating to Personal Information

- 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 VET FEE-HELP purposes.
- The SSNT has procedures under which a student enrolled may apply for, and receive, a copy of VET personal information that the SSNT holds in relation to that student.

3.1 Personal information Procedures for Students

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 VET 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 and 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.

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 .