

STUDENT REVIEW PROCEDURES FOR RE-CREDITING A FEE-HELP BALANCE

Definitions

The Act: Refers to the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*

Student: Refers to students, who are Australian citizens or permanent humanitarian visa holders who will be resident in Australia for the duration of their VET Units of Study, and who access VET FEE-HELP for payment of their tuition fees in respect of the VET Unit of Study in which they are enrolled.

Census Date: A published date set by the provider, no earlier than 20% of the way through a VET Unit of Study.

Tuition Fees: Fees paid for a VET Unit of Study that is approved for VET FEE-HELP and applies to Students who are, or would be entitled to VET FEE-HELP assistance under clause 43 of Schedule 1A of the Act.

Unit or VET Unit of Study: A VET Unit of Study approved for VET FEE-HELP that a Student may undertake with the provider, for which the Student may access VET FEE-HELP assistance to pay for all or part of their tuition fees.

DET: The Department of Education and Training.

1.0 Incurring a VET FEE-HELP Debt

- 1.1 A Student who is, or would be, eligible for VET FEE-HELP and has requested VET FEE-HELP Assistance, who withdraws from a Unit on or before the census date will not incur a VET FEE-HELP debt for the tuition fees for that Unit.
- 1.2 Students who have requested VET FEE-HELP Assistance who remain enrolled after the published census date will incur a VET FEE-HELP debt for the Units in which they are enrolled. A Student who withdraws from a Unit after the published census date for that Unit will incur a VET FEE-HELP debt for that Unit.

2.0 Re-crediting a FEE-HELP Balance

- 2.1 Students who withdraw from a Unit after the published census date, or fail to complete a Unit, may apply to have their FEE-HELP balance re-credited with respect to the Unit if they believe special circumstances apply in accordance with the following procedures. This application must be made within 12 months of the student withdrawing from the VET unit, or if not withdrawn, within 12 months of the end of the applicable unit study period, or Kreate Pty Ltd t/as RuralBiz Training waives this requirement on the grounds that it would not be, or was not, possible for the application to be made within the 12 month period. If Kreate Pty Ltd t/as RuralBiz Training had allowed a student to defer a unit of study in issue, the 12 month period applies from the end of the extended period for the unit in issue.

3.0 Special Circumstances

- 3.1 If a Student withdraws from a Unit after the published census date for that Unit, or has been unable to successfully complete a Unit, and believes this was due to special circumstances, the Student may apply to have their FEE-HELP balance re-credited for the affected Unit/s.
- 3.2 Kreate Pty Ltd t/as RuralBiz Training will re-credit the Student's FEE-HELP Balance if it is satisfied that special circumstances apply where:
 - these circumstances were beyond the Student's control; and

- these circumstances did not make their full impact on the student until on, or after the census date; and
- these circumstances were such that it was impracticable for the Student to complete the requirements for the Unit in the period during which the student undertook or was to undertake the Unit.

3.3 For circumstances to be beyond a Student's control, the situation should be that which a reasonable person would consider is not due to the Student's action or inaction, either direct or indirect, and for which the Student is not responsible. The situation must be unusual, uncommon or abnormal to be considered special circumstances.

3.4 Special circumstances do not include:

- lack of knowledge or understanding of requirements for VET FEE-HELP assistance; or
- a Student's incapacity to repay a VET FEE-HELP debt (repayments are income contingent and the Student can apply to the Australian Taxation Office for a deferral of a compulsory repayment in certain circumstances).

4.0 Re-credit of a Student's FEE-HELP Balance - The Process

4.1 Each application for re-credit of a Student's FEE-HELP balance will be considered on its merits together with all supporting documentation substantiating the special circumstances claim.

4.2 The Administration Manager, (Phone: 02 6884 8812) is the designated officer responsible for the assessment of a Student's request for a re-credit of their FEE-HELP balance due to special circumstances and for the initial decision regarding the request.

4.3 A Student must apply in writing to the Administration Manager at RuralBiz Training, PO Box 524, Dubbo NSW 2830 within 12 months of the withdrawal date, or if the Student has not withdrawn, within 12 months of the specified completion date of the Unit, or if a deferral has been allowed, within 12 months of the end of the extended period for the Unit.

4.4 RuralBiz Training has the discretion to waive this requirement if it is satisfied that it was not possible for the application to be made within the 12 month period. Relevant supporting documentation will be required to substantiate the claim.

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

- Unit(s) for which a Student is seeking to have a FEE-HELP balance re-credited and
- special circumstances as referred to above, including supporting documentation.

4.6 RuralBiz Training will consider each application within 28 days of receipt of the application. It will consider each request to re-credit a FEE-HELP balance in accordance with the requirements of Schedule 1A of the Act. Applicants will be notified in writing of the decision within 28 days.

5.0 Review of Decision

5.1 Where RuralBiz Training makes a decision NOT to re-credit a Student's FEE-HELP balance that decision may be subject to review.

5.2 If a Student is not satisfied with the decision made by RuralBiz Training, the Student may apply, within 28 days of the receipt of the original decision, for a review of the decision. The application for review must:

- be made within 28 days of receipt of the original decision;
- include the date of the original decision;

- state fully the reasons for applying for the review;
- include any additional relevant evidence.

5.3 Applications should be made in writing to the CEO at RuralBiz Training, PO Box 524, Dubbo NSW 2830 as the designated Review Officer of any decisions relating to a request for re-crediting of a FEE-HELP balance. The Review Officer is senior to the designated officer responsible for the original decision and was not involved in making the original decision to be reviewed.

5.4 The Review Officer will:

- acknowledge receipt of the application for review of a decision in writing within 10 working days; and
- inform the Student that if the Review Officer has not advised them of a decision within 45 days of receipt of the application for review, it is taken that the Review Officer has confirmed the original decision.

5.5 The Review Officer will then:

- review the information from the original decision and then assess any new evidence provided by the Student;
- provide written notice to the Student of the decision, setting out the reasons for the decision;
- inform the Student of their right to apply to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal if they disagree with the Review Decision, and timelines involved (see below). This provision does not apply to a full fee-paying student who has paid their fees upfront and did not request VET FEE-HELP assistance.

6.0 Reconsideration by the Administration Appeals Tribunal

6.1 At the time of the original decision, and at the time of the subsequent review decision, the Student will be notified of their review rights and responsibilities. The relevant officer will inform a Student in writing of their right to appeal to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) if they are not satisfied with the outcome and the contact details of the closest AAT office and the approximate costs of lodging an appeal. The application must be lodged at the AAT within 28 days of receiving written notice of the review decision. This time limitation can be extended in limited circumstances by order of the AAT.

6.2 Full details of the application process and fees payable are available on the AAT's website: www.aat.gov.au. An application fee may have to be paid in the amount of \$816 (from 1 July 2012) and is subject to change. Applications cannot proceed until the fee has been paid or waived. Applications for fee waiver must be made to the AAT. Refer to the AAT website for more details.

6.3 Details of closest AAT office:

Administrative Appeals Tribunal
Level 7, City Centre Tower
55 Market Street
Sydney NSW 2000
Telephone 1800 228 333

6.4 The Secretary of DET, or the Secretary's delegate, will be the respondent for cases that are brought before the AAT. Upon DET's receipt of a notification from the AAT, DET will notify RuralBiz Training that an appeal has been lodged. Upon receipt of this notification from DET, the Review Officer will provide DET with copies of all the documents that are relevant to the appeal within ten business days.



7.0 Publication

7.1 These procedures are published on the RuralBiz Training website (www.ruralbiztraining.com.au) and in the Student Handbook to ensure Students have up to date and accurate information publicly available to them.