



VET FEE-HELP STUDENT REVIEW, WITHDRAWAL and REFUND POLICY



INTRODUCTION

This policy applies to all students who access VET FEE-HELP assistance. Students who do not access VET FEE-HELP will be subject to a separate refund policy.

The purpose of this policy is to provide guidelines on the withdrawal process, and re-credit of VET FEE-HELP balances process, for all potential and currently enrolled domestic students in a VET FEE-HELP enabled course with Airline Academy of Australia (the Academy).

DEFINITIONS

In this procedure review means the 'formal consideration of a decision'.

- a. **The Act** refers to the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*
- b. **Student:** Refers to VET FEE-HELP eligible students, who access VET FEE-HELP for payment of their tuition fees in respect of the VET Unit of Study in which they are enrolled.
- c. **Census Date:** A published date, set by the provider, no earlier than 20% of the way through a VET Unit of Study.
- d. **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.
- e. **Unit of Study:** A VET Unit of study approved for VET FEE-HELP that a student may undertake at the Academy, for which the student may access VET FEE-HELP assistance to pay for all or part of their tuition fees.
- f. **The Academy:** The trading name of Royal Queensland Aero Club Limited.

POLICY CONTENT

The Academy endeavours to ensure that all enrolled students complete their studies and has support mechanisms in place to achieve this. Unfortunately, not all students progress to completion, and sometimes students find the need or desire to withdraw from their studies before completion.

The last day for an eligible student to withdraw their enrolment without incurring the tuition fees for that Unit of Study is the census date for that Unit of Study.

The Academy's census dates are published on its website at www.airlineacademy.com.au.

Incurring a VET FEE-HELP debt

Students who are, or would be, eligible for and have requested VET FEE-HELP who withdraw from a Unit of Study **on or before** the published census date will not incur a VET FEE-HELP debt for the tuition fees for that Unit of Study. Students who remain enrolled after the published census date will incur a VET FEE-HELP debt. Students who withdraw from a Unit of Study **after** the census date for that Unit of Study will incur a VET FEE-HELP debt for that Unit of Study.



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The Act states that if a student formally withdraws their enrolment from a Unit of Study on or before the census date of that Unit of Study, the Academy must repay to that person any upfront payment of his or her VET tuition fee for that Unit of Study, and the student will not incur a VET FEE-HELP debt for the Unit of Study.

The obligation on the Academy to repay to a person under the above paragraph arises immediately upon the person ceasing to be enrolled in the Unit of Study. The Academy must not require the person to apply for the repayment.

The Academy's obligation to refund person/s as per the above two paragraphs does not apply if:

- a. the enrolment was withdrawn because the Academy has ceased to provide the Unit of Study as a result of ceasing to provide the VET course of study; and
- b. the VET tuition assurance requirements applied to the Academy at the time the Academy ceased to provide the Unit of Study; and
- c. the person who was enrolled in the Unit of Study chose the VET course assurance option in relation to the Unit of Study.

WITHDRAWAL PROCEDURE

Should a student consider withdrawing from their course they are encouraged to discuss their circumstances with their principle instructor in the first instance. The instructor is to assess the student's circumstances and explore potential avenues of continuance in their course.

To withdraw from a Unit of Study without incurring a VET FEE-HELP debt (or being ineligible for a refund of their upfront payment), students must follow the following formal withdrawal procedure **by the census date**. Students are required to complete the formal withdrawal process for every Unit of Study they wish to withdraw from.

- a. A Student must apply in writing on the *Application for Withdrawal or Transfer* form, and submit to the Head of Operations, or their representative, in time for it to be processed by the census date
- b. The student must attend a withdrawal interview with the Head of Operations, or if unavailable, their representative, who must ensure they are able to conduct this interview with the student prior to the census date (in-house administrative processes must not prevent a student from being able to withdraw their enrolment by the census date if they so wish). It is important for students to make themselves aware of the withdrawal process, and to factor this process into their decision making regarding their studies.
- c. Upon completion of the withdrawal Interview, the Head of Operations, or their representative, is to forward the *Application for Withdrawal or Transfer* form to the Finance Department
- d. The Finance Department is to:
 - i. conduct an immediate reconciliation of the student's account including, but not limited to, flight hours and simulator hours
 - ii. refund any upfront payments of tuition fees for the Unit of Study withdrawn from, within 14 to 30 days of withdrawal
 - iii. adjust the student's account to reflect the removal of the VET FEE-HELP amount
 - iv. close the student's account



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- e. The student must keep a copy of all their withdrawal documentation as confirmation that they have completed their institution or provider's formal withdrawal procedures by the census date.

If a student does not correctly withdraw their enrolment by the census date, the Academy is within its right to charge that student for the tuition fees for that Unit(s) of Study, regardless of whether the student chose not to attend any classes, changed their mind about studying that course, or chose not to submit any assessment items/sit the exam.

If a student transfers to another institution/provider, or to a different course at the Academy, they must withdraw their enrolment from their original course/the Academy. Otherwise, the student will be liable to pay the tuition fees for that course if they are still considered to be an enrolled student. A *Request for Commonwealth Assistance* form does not 'follow' a student if that student chooses to change their course or their provider.

Re-enrolling into a Unit of Study

Should a student want to re-enrol into a Unit of Study they had previously withdrawn from:

- the student must provide in writing their permission to re-enrol in that Unit of Study following their withdrawal
- the student must provide in writing their permission to re-enrol in any other Units of Study
- the student may be subject to a preliminary assessment of current competency or recognition of prior learning (RPL). In this instance the enrolment process will be the same as if the student enrolls for the first time, including any enrolment fees for each Unit of Study. There will be no additional enrolment fees

RE-CREDITING VET FEE-HELP BALANCE

The Academy has put in place the following procedure for reviewing decisions related to the re-crediting of VET FEE-HELP balance for students who have withdrawn after the census date or have failed to complete a Unit of Study because of special circumstances (defined below). These procedures ensure that the Academy complies with the fairness requirements in relation to review procedures for VET FEE-HELP.

Special Circumstances

If a Student withdraws from a Unit of Study after the published census date for that Unit of Study, or has been unable to successfully complete a Unit of Study and believes this was due to special circumstances, the student may apply to have their VET FEE-HELP balance re-credited for the affected Units of Study.

The Academy will re-credit the student's VET FEE-HELP balance if it is satisfied that Special Circumstances apply where:

- these circumstances are beyond their 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 of Study.

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.



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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)

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

- a. A Student must apply in writing on the *Application for Withdrawal or Transfer* form and the *Application for Special Circumstances* form, to the Chief Executive Officer 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 of Study. The Academy 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.
- b. The application for re-crediting a VET FEE-HELP balance must include details of the:
 - Unit(s) of Study for which a student is seeking to have a VET FEE-HELP balance re-credited and
 - special circumstances as referred to above, including supporting documentation.
- c. The Academy will consider each application within 15 working days working days of receipt of the application. It will consider each request to re-credit a VET FEE-HELP balance in accordance with the requirements of Schedule 1A of the Act. Applicants will be notified in writing of the decision within 15 working days of reaching a decision.

Review of Decision

Where the Academy makes a decision NOT to re-credit a student's VET FEE-HELP balance that decision may be subject to review.

If a student is not satisfied with the decision made by the Academy the student may apply 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

Applications should be made in writing to the Group Manager Development as the designated Review Officer of any decisions relating to a request for re-crediting of a VET FEE-HELP balance. Note: The Review Officer is senior to the designated VET FEE-HELP officer responsible for the original decision and was not involved in making the original decision to be reviewed.

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.



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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 (AAT) if they disagree with the Review Decision, and timelines involved (see below).

Escalated Review

If a student is not satisfied with the outcome of the review of an application for re-credit of their VET FEE-HELP balance they may escalate the review. 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

Applications should be made in writing to the Group Chief Executive as the designated Senior Review Officer of any decisions relating to a request for re-crediting of a VET FEE-HELP balance. Note: the Senior Review Officer is senior to the designated Review officer responsible for the original review and was not involved in making the original decision to be reviewed.

The Senior 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 Senior Review Officer has not advised them of a decision within 45 days of receipt of the application for review, it is taken that the Senior Review Officer has confirmed the original decision. The Senior 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)

Reconsideration by the Administration Appeals Tribunal

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.



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Administration Appeals Tribunal Details

Your nearest AAT office is in Brisbane:

Tel:	07-3361 3000 or 1300 366 700 (local call charge from fixed phone lines, calls from mobiles may cost more)
Email:	brisbane.registry@aat.gov.au Please read email guidelines before sending any documents or other attachments.
Fax:	07-3361 3001
Post:	Administrative Appeals Tribunal GPO Box 9955 Brisbane QLD 4001
DX:	DX 253 Brisbane
Address:	Level 4, Harry Gibbs Building Commonwealth Law Courts 119 North Quay (entry is from Tank Street) Brisbane

Note: Full details of the application process and fees payable are available on the AAT Registry's website: <http://www.aat.gov.au>. An application fee may have to be paid. 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.

The Department of Education and Training, or a delegate thereof will be the respondent for cases that are brought before the AAT. Upon the Department of Education and Training's receipt of a notification from the AAT, the Department of Education and Training will advise the Academy that an appeal has been lodged. Upon receipt of this notification from the Department of Education and Training, the Review Officer will provide the Department of Education and Training with copies of all the documents that are relevant to the appeal within five (5) business days.

PUBLICATION

This policy and procedure is published on the Academy website www.airlineacademy.com.au to ensure students have up to date and accurate information publicly available to them.