

# Withdrawal and Refunds Policy and Procedure

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## Introduction

### Purpose

This document describes the policy and procedures for the accurate and timely processing of student withdrawals and refunds (all student cohorts and categories of delivery).

### Scope

This procedure applies to withdrawals and refunds of course fees in all categories of delivery.

## Rationale

### Principles/Statement

Under the conditions of its Funding Contract to provide Victorian Government-subsidised training, TAFE Gippsland must fulfil certain process and reporting requirements or risk not receiving or forfeiting funds already paid.

The withdrawal process is highly structured for a reason; reporting errors or omissions have a direct impact on our financial viability. It is therefore critical that staff assess and process withdrawals in accordance with this policy.

In addition to the financial dimension there are also important customer service obligations. Students have a right to expect timely and accurate withdrawal administration. In addition, the Institute has a duty of care to its students.

Extended non-attendance is judged as a withdrawal (both by internal processes and by SVTS reporting). However, withdrawals should not be treated as a rote administrative process but as the option of last resort. Education is a shared endeavour; withdrawals have significant financial and aspirational repercussions for affected students and financial and reputational repercussions for TAFE Gippsland.

## Procedure

### Withdrawals

1. Teaching teams are required to review student participation on a weekly basis. At any point, but especially in the first 2 weeks after course commencement, when evidence of participation is not apparent for a particular student and there has been no formal withdrawal or other reason provided for “non-participation”, the student may be identified as potentially being ‘at risk’.

2. If the investigation reveals that the student does not intend to participate further in their course or unit, the trainer must refer the student to Student Support Services. The Student Support Services Team will endeavour to contact all students to establish their needs and where possible provide support and guidance with the objective of increasing student retention (see TL 011 Student Support Procedure and Attendance and Participation Procedure TL 026).
3. However, trainers and the Student Support Team both need to be very conscious of census dates and commencement dates in line with refunds, with respect to students seeking to withdraw from the full qualification. That is, any intervention must be prompt and not endanger the student's option of withdrawing before the census date, or deem them ineligible for a refund.
4. Teaching teams must ensure that the date a student notifies TAFE Gippsland of their intention to withdrawal or cancel their enrolment, the student will effectively be withdrawn from the date of notification.
5. If a student withdraws from individual unit(s) or from the entire course, a withdrawal form must be completed.
6. A withdrawal form may be completed by the student or teacher, then submitted to relevant Program Manager for approval. A withdrawal will take place if a student confirms themselves, or by non-attendance / non-communication
7. It should then be submitted to student administration for processing.
8. The withdrawal form must also show a course commencement and withdrawal date, attended hours or any commenced units and show a dollar amount for any material refund (for materials returned unused or material not yet unallocated) and be signed by the teacher. The withdrawal date for a module/unit or course withdrawal needs to be within the last month the student participated (in line with evidence of participation requirements) and not the actual date the paperwork was completed.
9. Please note: attended hours for withdrawn units cannot be 100% of the scheduled / nominal hours of a module/unit. For withdrawn units where participation has occurred, the attended hours claimable must be calculated by the following – divide scheduled hours by the months between the start and nominal end date of the unit (this can be the study period end date, calculated by the months actually engaged by the student.
10. For example:
  - Start date of the unit is in February and the nominal end date is June.
  - The unit scheduled hours is 50
  - Student withdraws after two months, and evidence of engagement has been recorded for both months.
  - Total claimable attended hours on withdrawal is 20 SCH for the unit
11. If the student is enrolled in a Diploma, Advanced Diploma or Vocational Graduate course refer to VET Student Loan: Tuition Refund and Student Review Policy TL029 and apply the principles of this document.

## Fee Refunds

If the Institute cancels a course, 100% of fees will be refunded.

### **GOVERNMENT-SUBSIDISED STUDENTS IN CERTIFICATE I - IV COURSES:**

A student refund will only be proceed upon the completion and submission of a 'Withdrawal/Refund Application form' within 4 weeks of the annual course commencement date.

If a student withdraws from all or part of a government funded course within four (4) weeks of the course annual commencement, and submits a 'refund application form, they are eligible for a refund for all non-commenced units. Any refund is subject to the return of the student's ID card and property or material belonging to the Institute. A material refund is subject to the return of unused / unallocated materials.

If a student withdraws from all or part of a government funded course after four (4) weeks of the annual course commencement, a refund of tuition fees will not apply. A refund on materials depends on the return of unused materials.

### **DIPLOMA-LEVEL AND ABOVE COURSES:**

Students at Diploma, or above levels, regardless of whether they are fee-for-service or government subsidised, are subject to the VET Student Loan: Tuition Refund and Student Review Policy TL029.

If a student withdraws before the census date a full refund of tuition fees will be processed. If a student is using VET Student Loans, they will not incur a HELP debt for the withdrawn units.

However, if a student withdraws after the census date, they will receive no refund of tuition fees. If they are using VET Student Loans, they will incur a HELP debt and their FEE HELP limit will be reduced.

VET Student Loan processes and procedures for students who withdraw from a course are in line with clause 86/87, subdivision E of the VET Student Loan Rules 2016. No financial or administrative charges will be incurred or applied if a student withdraws prior to, or after the census date for a unit.

Subsequent unit or course enrolments will not occur post withdrawal unless written permission has been received by the student.

If after the census date, special circumstances occur and a student is unable to continue and complete their studies, a student can apply to the Manager Student Administration for a refund and their Fee Help balance re-credit, and student loan debt remitted in line with the VET Student Loan and Student Review Policy TL029.

Complaints in relation to academic or non-academic matters in relation to students who withdraw and have a VET Student Loan balances are to be reviewed and assessed in line with the Grievances, Appeals and Reviews Policy TL034.

**FOR COMMERCIAL/FEE FOR SERVICE PROGRAMS**

If a student withdraws from a commercial/fee for service course 5 days or more prior to course commencement they will receive a full refund.

If a student withdraws from a commercial/fee for service course less than 5 days prior to course commencement they will receive a refund of 20% of the course fees (with a minimum charge \$50).

Students are not entitled to a refund on commercial / fee for service courses if they withdraw or do not attend. For short courses only, and at the discretion of the Delivery Team, the tuition may be allocated to a subsequent short course session.

These details are summarised in the following table

Clause	TAFE Gippsland Refund Policy
<b>Certificate I-IV courses – government funded</b>	
Student initiated withdrawals within 4 weeks of training commencement – government funded	Full refund of units not yet commenced less: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charge for materials already utilised</li> </ul>
Student initiated withdrawals four weeks or more after training has commenced in the current year – government funded	No refund of tuition fees: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Charge for materials already utilised</li> </ul>
<b>VET Student Loan available courses Diploma, Advanced Diploma or Vocational Graduate programs, and nominated Certificate IV courses.</b>	
Student initiated withdrawals prior to the census date	Full refund of tuition fees. If you are using VET Student Loans, you will not incur a HELP debt for any units withdrawn prior to census.
Student initiated withdrawals after the census date	No refund of tuition fees. If you are using VET Student Loan scheme, you will incur a HELP debt and your FEE HELP limit will be reduced.
<b>Fee-for service/commercial programs</b>	
Student initiated withdrawals – fee-for-service programs	Up to 5 days prior to course commencement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Full refund less \$50 administrative charge</li> </ul> Less than 5 days prior to course commencement <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 20% of the course fees refunded (minimum charge \$50)</li> </ul>

If the Institute cancels or is unable to provide services for which the learner has prepaid, the learner will:

- be placed into an equivalent course such that:
  - the new location is suitable to the learner, and
  - the learner receives the full services for which they have prepaid at no additional cost to the learner or
- If the Institute cancels a short course 100% of fees will be refunded to the student
- In cases where the Institute ceases to offer the services or a student transfers to another RTO (Recognised Training Organisation) and provides written proof of enrolment into the same qualification – 100 % of fees any units not commenced will be refunded.

## Processing

12. Withdrawals must be processed within 5 working days of receiving all the required information. Withdrawals will be prioritised for those students approaching 4 weeks post course commencement, or their census dates.
13. The withdrawal form is sent to the Student Administration Help Desk email for processing within 5 days of receipt from the teaching faculty.
14. A withdrawal letter is produced in the Document Production section of the SMS advising the student of the outcome of any refund or fees that may be payable.
15. If the student has a loan, their Direct Debit Repayment Schedule will be credited with the appropriate amount. However they may potentially still owe fees to the Institute for hours they have attended before withdrawing, or hours they will continue to attend. Student Administration will attach a copy of a statement if there is a balance owing and send out with the withdrawal letter.
16. Student refunds are processed every Monday via a direct deposit to the student's nominated bank account. Refunds may be processed outside this cycle on approval from the Finance Team.
17. The withdrawal form is sent to Student Admin for filing.
18. All withdrawals must be reported within the year of the scheduled commencement of training and no later than two months from the point of withdrawal.

## Reference and Supporting Information

### Definitions

Term	Definition
<b>Team Representative</b>	Any person authorised by a Team Leader to approve the documentation relevant to withdrawals and refunds
<b>VET Student Loans</b>	VET Student Loans is an income contingent loan scheme for the vocational educational and training sector
<b>Tuition fees</b>	The tuition fee is the fee that the Institute charges students for each VET unit of study. VET Student Loans can only be used to pay for tuition fees. There are no minimum or maximum tuition fee requirements for VET Student Loans

### Supporting Documents

Skills First VET Funding Contract 2018 – 2019

VET Student Loans Act 2016

VET Student Loans Rules 2016

VET Student Loans (Consequential Amendments and Transitional Provisions) Act 2016

VET Student Loans Provider Manual

VET Provider Guidelines

### Internal Policy and Procedures

VET Student Loans Tuition Refund and Student Review Policy TL 029

Attendance and Participation Policy TL 026

### Forms and Templates

Withdrawal /Refund Application SMS 018

Student Fee Refund Request FTFIN 07

Tax Adjustment Credit Note FTFIN 02

## Responsibility

- Director Academic Governance

Please Note: For further information or assistance regarding policies and procedures contact: [qa@tafegippsland.edu.au](mailto:qa@tafegippsland.edu.au) | URL: [www.tafegippsland.edu.au](http://www.tafegippsland.edu.au)

## Document Version Control Table

Item	Summary of Update	Version Control	Revised Date
1	Original Policy Document	V0.0	27/07/2015
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Original Policy Document rebranded to Federation Training</li></ul>	V1.0	15/06/2018
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Updated to meet Skills First Funding Contract 2018-2019 obligations.</li></ul>	V1.1	15/10/2018
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Updated to meet VET Student Loan Obligations</li></ul>	V1.2	15/10/2018
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Rebranded from Federation Training to TAFE Gippsland</li></ul>	V2.0	28/06/2019