

QUALITY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

VET FEE-HELP POLICY

INTRODUCTION

1. VET FEE-HELP is an income contingent loan scheme for the vocational education and training (VET) sector that is part of the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP). It is an extension of higher education FEE-HELP arrangements.
2. VET FEE-HELP will assist eligible students who are enrolled in one of the following VET accredited courses through a VET provider, to help pay for all or part of their tuition fees:
 - Diploma*
 - Advanced Diploma*
 - Graduate Certificate
 - Graduate Diploma

* with credit transfer arrangements in place with a Higher Education Provider (HEP) towards a bachelor degree.
3. Certain VET Providers are exempt from meeting the basic requirement to have a VET credit transfer arrangement in place. Where a provider offers, in accordance with its Scope of Registration, a diploma or an advanced diploma course in a Reform State or Territory, the VET provider is exempt from meeting the VET credit transfer requirements for students in that State or Territory. Victoria is a Reform State.
4. Central Gippsland Institute of TAFE (GippsTAFE) as a provider must operate and continue to operate at an appropriate level of quality and meet AQTF requirements. In addition to any requirements and responsibilities which may arise under the AQTF, GippsTAFE must comply with the quality and accountability requirements for VET FEE-HELP, noting that the VET FEE-HELP requirements **only** apply to those persons or students who are or would be entitled to VET FEE-HELP assistance and for eligible courses in which those students are or could be enrolled. Accordingly GippsTAFE will ensure the following policy is adhered to.

POLICY:

5. VET FEE-HELP has been established to assist eligible students to pay for all or part of their VET courses of study. Students who fall into the category of Victorian VET FEE-HELP Eligible Students must meet Victorian Government stipulations and conditions.
6. VET FEE-HELP loans are only available when undertaking a VET course with an approved VET provider at the diploma, advanced diploma, graduate certificate and graduate diploma level.
7. VET FEE-HELP loans are paid to the provider on behalf of the student by the Australian Government against outstanding tuition fees for each unit of study the student is enrolled in.
8. Students repay the loan to the Australian Government through the tax system once a person reaches the minimum income threshold level for repayment.

VET FEE-HELP Providers

9. Organisations must meet specific requirements under Schedule 1A of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* to receive approval as a VET provider before their current and future students can access VET FEE-HELP assistance. For detailed information regarding the requirements of a VET FEE-HELP provider see VET Provider Handbook, various sections.
10. VET FEE-HELP loans can only be accessed through approved VET providers. These providers will have the appropriate information and forms for students after the organisation has been approved as a VET FEE-HELP provider.
11. Approved VET providers offering diploma or advanced diploma courses must have an approved credit transfer arrangement to a bachelor degree with a higher education provider (HEP).
12. Certain VET Providers are exempt from meeting the basic requirement to have a VET credit transfer arrangement in place. Where a provider offers, in accordance with its Scope of Registration, a diploma or an advanced diploma course in a Reform State or Territory, the VET provider is exempt from meeting the VET credit transfer requirements for students in that State or Territory. Victoria is a Reform State.

Student Eligibility

13. To be eligible for VET FEE-HELP assistance, the student must:
 - be a full fee paying student; **or** be a government subsidised student in a diploma or advanced diploma course, subsidised by a Reform State or Territory; **and**
 - meet the citizenship or residency requirements;
 - have a FEE-HELP balance greater than zero. That is, not have exceeded his or her FEE-HELP limit;
 - be enrolled in a unit that meets the course requirements;
 - be enrolled in the unit on or before the census date for the unit and remain so enrolled at the end of the census date;
 - meet the Tax File Number (TFN) requirements;
 - have completed, signed and given to an appropriate officer of the provider a *Request for VET FEE-HELP Assistance* form on or before the census date.

VET Tuition Fees

14. Under paragraph 28 (2)(a) and 28 (2)(b) of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (HESA), a VET provider must give the schedule of tuition fees to the Minister by the publication deadlines for tuition fees, except for tuition fees for units that are offered under restricted access arrangements.
15. A VET provider must give the schedule to the Minister by:
 - posting the schedule on the provider's website; and
 - emailing the schedule or a URL (uniform resource locator) link (or links) to the schedule on the provider's website to the email address vetfeehelp@deewr.gov.au.
16. Where a VET provider **submits a link** to its website it must maintain a printable record of the published tuition fees that applied at a particular time including enough information to respond to student queries or provide the information to DEEWR upon request. See VET Provider Guidelines, Chapter 8.

VET Tuition Fee Refund

17. GippsTAFE will meet its VET Tuition Fee repayment requirements through its membership of the TAFE Directors Tuition Assurance Schemes. Under the Tuition Assurance Scheme, if GippsTAFE ceases to provide the VET course of study of which the unit formed part, and if a student chooses the VET tuition fee repayment option, and not the VET course assurance option in respect of the unit, then within 20 business days after receiving notification of that choice GippsTAFE will:
- re-credit the student's FEE-HELP balance for that unit; and
 - notify the VTAS operator, which is TAFE Directors Tuition Assurance Scheme
18. The VTAS operator will, within 10 business days of being notified:
- pay the student any up-front VET payments paid for a VET unit of study; and
 - pay the Commonwealth any amounts paid to GippsTAFE in discharge of the students VET tuition fee liability for the unit.
19. GippsTAFE will repay to a person who is, or would be entitled, to VET FEE-HELP assistance under clause 43 of Schedule 1A of the Act, any payment of his or her VET tuition fee for a VET unit of study that meets the course requirements under subclause 45(1) of Schedule 1A of the Act that the person made on or before the census date for the unit if the person is no longer enrolled in the unit at the end of the census date.

Reporting Requirements

20. Approved VET providers will be required to provide data to DEEWR containing student demographic and enrolment information. Compliance with the reporting requirements is a condition of continued approval as a VET provider under HESA. See VET Provider Handbook, section 7.
21. Approved VET providers must publish the census date for each unit of study that it provides or proposes to provide by the date ascertained in accordance with, and in the manner specified in, the VET Administration Guidelines Ch 3.

Fair Treatment

22. GippsTAFE will treat fairly all of its students (who are or would be entitled to VET FEE-HELP assistance) and all of the persons seeking to enrol with GippsTAFE. It is to be understood that the application of fair treatment does not require that all students are treated the same. To ensure fair, transparent and consistent treatment, GippsTAFE has written and implemented policies and procedures in accordance with relevant Acts, legislation, regulations and industry requirement. These are outlined following.

Equal Benefits and Opportunities

23. GippsTAFE has in place an open, fair and transparent procedure which is available to all students and gives accountability to staff to make decisions based on merit and to consider each application on a case by case basis. GippsTAFE undertakes to ensure flexibility and unbiased consideration of all applications when dealing with persons applying for courses.
24. GippsTAFE will not apply an income test when making decisions about which of their students are eligible for VET FEE-HELP assistance. See VET Provider Handbook, section 3.3; VET Provider Guidelines, Chapter 5 and Access and Equity procedure (GippsTAFE)

Student Grievance and Review Procedures – Academic and Non-Academic

25. GippsTAFE has robust procedures and processes in place to allow students to openly question, discuss and seek a full review regarding outcomes they may not agree with, this is in respect of both curriculum and non-curriculum issues. See VET Provider Handbook,

section 3.3; VET Provider Guidelines, Chapter 6; Assessment Review and Appeals (incl. VET FEE-HELP) Procedure (GippsTAFE), Customer Grievance and Feedback Procedure (GippsTAFE) and Student Discipline and Appeals Policy and Procedure (GippsTAFE).

26. In accordance with VET Provider Guidelines – 6.10.10(b), GippsTAFE's procedures relating to the grievance process will be agreed to and ratified by its governing body.

Customer Complaints and Feedback Process

27. Complaints of any nature received by GippsTAFE will be treated with discretion and remain confidential. The Business Excellence Unit of GippsTAFE has the authority and accountability to investigate all issues raised and to respond to the complainant in a professional and timely manner. See Customer Grievance and Feedback procedure (GippsTAFE).

28. All students are made aware of support services available, of their rights and obligations, their right of appeal and of the process for lodging complaints or feedback during their induction briefing post enrolment at GippsTAFE. See VET Provider Handbook, section 3.3; VET Provider Guidelines, Chapter 6; AQTF, Element 2.2; Customer Feedback procedure (GippsTAFE)

Privacy and Personal Information

29. GippsTAFE will, at all times, comply with the requirements of the Information Privacy Act 2000 (Vic) and the Privacy Act 1988 (Commonwealth).

30. A documented procedure has been established to ensure that GippsTAFE, in conducting Institute business, applies management processes that protect and respect individual information privacy rights. See VET Provider Handbook, section 3.3; and Privacy and Personal Information procedure (GippsTAFE).

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

[Assessment Review and Appeals \(incl. VET FEE-HELP\) Procedure](#) (GippsTAFE)

[Student Discipline and Appeals Policy and Procedure](#) (GippsTAFE)

[Privacy and Personal Information Procedure](#) (GippsTAFE)

[Customer Grievance and Feedback Procedure](#) (GippsTAFE)

[Student Induction Procedure](#) (GippsTAFE)

[VET Provider Handbook](#)

[VET FEE-HELP Guidelines](#)

[VET Provider Guidelines](#)

VET Administration Guidelines

[AQTF – Essential Standards for Registration](#)

DEFINITIONS

Census Date for a Unit of Study:

The closing date for a student to apply for VET FEE-HELP assistance for that unit

DEEWR:

Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations

FEE-HELP:

An income contingent loan for eligible higher education full fee-paying students under HELP

HELP:

Higher Education Loan Program consisting of VET FEE-HELP, HECS-HELP, FEE-HELP and OS-HELP

HESA:
Higher Education Support Act 2003

Provider:
VET Provider

VET:
Vocational Education and Training

REFERENCES

[Higher Education Support Act 2003 \(VET FEE-HELP Assistance Scheme Schedule 1A\)](#)

REVIEWING OFFICER: Manager Operational Services

APPROVED BY: Institute Executive, under delegation from the Institute Board

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