

Higher Education Domestic Students - Refund of Fees Procedure

Section 1 - Introduction

(1) This document sets out the University's student refund procedures for fees for Higher Education (HE) domestic students. Such fees include up-front tuition fees for Full-fee Courses and Student Services and Amenities Fees as well as fees paid through HECS or FEE-HELP provisions

(2) These procedures are based on the assumption that any fines or other incidental fees incurred during the student's enrolment with the University have been paid in full and the Student Information System is showing the student's account to be in credit.

Section 2 - Compliance

(3) This is a compliance requirement under the [Higher Education Standards Framework \(Threshold Standards\) 2021](#).

Section 3 - Intent

(4) The intent of this document is to set out the University's procedures for fee refunds to domestic higher education students; the circumstances in which refunds or remissions will be authorised or denied; and the dates, which are relevant to such refunds or remissions.

Section 4 - Relevant Definitions

(5) In the context of this document:

- a. ATO means Australian Taxation Office;
- b. Census date means the last day that a student can notify the University in writing of any changes to their enrolment and complete fee payment for that semester, including applying for a refund of any tuition fees paid;
- c. Commonwealth Supported Place means a place which is offered to Domestic students at an approved Australian Higher Education provider, where the Commonwealth Government pays a percentage of the value of that place directly to the Provider, the remainder of which must be paid by the student. The student may either pay this remainder up front or may defer payment through HECS-HELP provisions;
- d. Domestic Student means a student who is an Australian Citizen or a holder of an Australian permanent visa;
- e. FEE-HELP means a commonwealth loan scheme that assists eligible full-fee paying students to pay their tuition fees. FEE-HELP can cover all or part of a student's tuition fees;
- f. Full-Fee Place means the student pays the full value of their place directly to the provider and there is no Commonwealth Government contribution;
- g. HECS means the Commonwealth Government Higher Education Contribution Scheme and is a student contribution payable either upfront or in arrears to the Australian government, to off-set the cost of tuition fees;

- h. HECS-HELP means an assistance scheme which is available to domestic higher education students to defer their Higher Education Contribution Scheme (HECS) payment to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) through the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP). This loan is repaid through the taxation system once a student's subsequent earnings exceed a stated threshold;
- i. SA-HELP means an assistance scheme which is available to domestic higher education students to defer their Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) payment to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) through the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP). This loan is repaid through the taxation system once a student's subsequent earnings exceed a stated threshold;
- j. Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) means a fee that higher education providers can charge to students for services and amenities of a non-academic nature. At the University, this fee will be calculated based on student enrolment load, and will be capped at a defined amount for each calendar year;
- k. Special Circumstances means an exception to the general rule. Special Circumstance provisions will be applied to a student's application for refund where the University is satisfied that such circumstances are:
 - i. beyond the student's control; and
 - ii. did not make their full impact on the person until on or after the census date for the unit of study in question; and
 - iii. makes it impractical for the person to complete the requirements for the unit during the period which the student undertook, or was to undertake, the unit;
 - iv. NOTE: Special circumstances do not include a lack of knowledge or understanding of requirements under the schemes or a person's incapacity to repay a Higher Education Loan Programme (HELP) debt;
- l. Student Contribution Fee means the amount that a Commonwealth supported student must pay (either up-front or with a HECS-HELP loan) for each unit of study they are enrolled in;
- m. Student Default means the student withdraws from the course/unit;
- n. Tuition fees mean an agreed amount of money paid by a student for a unit of study towards a course with the University;
- o. Unit means a subject or unit that a person may undertake with a higher education provider as part of a course of study leading to a higher education award; and
- p. University Default means where the University fails to provide a course/unit in the semester it is offered or ceases to provide a course/unit to a student enrolled in that course/unit.

Section 5 - Procedures

Eligibility for Refund

(6) A full refund of fees will be paid when one of the following occurs:

- a. A student withdraws from a unit/s prior to the applicable census date.
- b. An offer of enrolment is withdrawn by the University (unless the offer was made on the basis of incorrect or incomplete information being supplied by the applicant).
- c. The University is unable to provide the course or unit in which the student is enrolled.
- d. The student is not permitted to enrol because the relevant requirements (usually course or unit pre-requisites) are not satisfied.

Refund of Fees

(7) A refund of fees is not automatic; students must make an application for refund by completing the [Request for Student Refund form](#) and submitting this to the University cashiers at the time of withdrawal.

(8) An application for refund will not normally be accepted if it is lodged later than twelve (12) months from the end of the relevant semester. All on time applications for refund will be considered and, subject to approval, University cashiers will process the refund to the student (or a third party if they have paid fees on the student's behalf).

Refund Method

(9) All approved refunds will be completed within four (4) weeks of the [Request for Student Refund form](#) being received. Refunds will only be completed by the same method in which the fees were originally paid (e.g. if the fees were paid by credit card they will be repaid to the same credit card* when the card details are resupplied to the cashiers; if the fees were paid by electronic funds transfer, the refund will be transferred back to the originating bank account etc.)

(10) Only in exceptional circumstances will a cheque be the means of a refund.

(11) Refunds can be processed directly into a nominated bank account through Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). Once the university has processed the refund, access to these funds should be within two (2) working days

(12) Refunds are not given in cash unless the refund is less than AUD\$30.00 and this service is only available from the Casuarina campus.

(13) Where a third party such as a sponsoring body or scholarship agency pays the student's fees, any refund will be paid to the third party.

(14) *If a student has made a payment with a credit card, under current Australian banking regulations any refund must be re-credited to the original card. The University will refund to the original credit card if the initial payment was via that credit card within the previous twelve (12) months, otherwise the refund will be processed by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT). It may take up to seven (7) working days before the credit appears on the nominated bank account due to bank processing practices.

Withdrawal from Unit/s after Census Date

(15) If a student withdraws from a unit/s after the census date they are not entitled to a refund of any fees except in the case of University default.

(16) If, however, there are special circumstances that led to a withdrawal, the University may refund all or some of the tuition fees and/or SSAF paid for that semester. Students will be required to provide the HE107 Application for Remission form along with detailed and relevant documentation to support their case and if approved the University may refund some or all of the fees.

(17) All debts incurred and payments made are reported to the Commonwealth government immediately after the census date. Any changes to data reported by way of withdrawals and approved request for refunds require the University to report the amendments to the Commonwealth government.

Refund Processing

(18) All approved refunds will be processed as follows:

a. Tuition Fees

- i. Where a student has paid full tuition fees up front, these will be refunded.
- ii. Where a student has paid partial tuition fees and has a FEE-HELP loan, the partial fees will be refunded and the FEE-HELP debt with the ATO will be reversed.
- iii. Where a student has a FEE-HELP loan for the full fee, the FEE-HELP debt with the ATO will be reversed.

b. Student Contribution Fees

- i. Where a student has paid the full student contribution fee up front, this will be refunded.
 - ii. Where a student has paid partial student contribution fees and has a HECS-HELP loan, the partial fees will be refunded and the HECS-HELP debt with the ATO will be reversed.
 - iii. Where a student has a HECS-HELP loan for the full fee, the HECS-HELP debt with the ATO will be reversed.
- c. Student Services and Amenities Fee
- i. Where a student has paid the full SSAF up front, this will be refunded.
 - ii. Where a student has paid a partial SSAF and has a SA-HELP loan, the University will reimburse the student for the full amount however, the SA-HELP debt will remain with the ATO.
 - iii. Where a student has an SA-HELP loan for the full SSAF, the University will reimburse the student for the full amount however, the SA-HELP debt will remain with the ATO.
 - iv. It is the responsibility of the student to utilise the University's reimbursement monies to acquit their debt with the ATO.

Status and Details

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Responsible Executive	Fiona Coulson Deputy Vice-Chancellor Academic
Implementation Officer	Sharon Green Manager Student Finance
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