

# Fee Adjustments Procedure

## Section 1 - Summary

(1) This Procedure details processes involved in the refunding, waiving or payment time extensions on all or part of any fees and charges of students under specific circumstances, as identified in the [Fees and Charges Regulations 2013](#).

## Section 2 - Scope

(2) This Procedure applies to fee adjustments for onshore students, except those specified at Clause 4.

(3) This Procedure applies to the refunding, waiving or extending of fees and charges that include:

- a. Onshore fees paid upfront
- b. Ancillary and material fees
- c. Student Services and Amenities Fees (SSAF), and
- d. Any other fees fixed under [Fees and Charges Regulations 2013](#)

(4) This Procedure excludes the refunding, adjustment or waiving of fees and charges for:

- a. Offshore student studying at offshore partner institutes
- b. Exchange Programs
- c. Study Aboard
- d. Students whose fees are paid via a loan or sponsorship
- e. Any other exempt Students as detailed within this Procedure.

(5) Fee Waivers at VU Sydney fall outside of this Procedure.

## Section 3 - HESF/ASQA/ESOS Alignment

(6) HESF: 7.2 Information for Prospective and Current Students

(7) ESOS Act: Part 3 Division 2; Part 5 Division 2.

(8) Standards for RTOs: Standard 5; 7; Schedule 6.

## Section 4 - Definitions

(9) Census Date – the census date in a teaching period (HE) or Study Period for Diploma and above courses (VET) is the date by which student's enrolment records are finalised for reporting to government for that teaching/study period. Further details are contained in [Attachment 1 - Census Dates](#).

- (10) Domestic Student
- (11) Fee
- (12) Fine
- (13) International Student (Onshore)
- (14) Non-Tuition Fee
- (15) Refund
- (16) Student Services and Amenities Fees (SSAF)
- (17) Tuition Fee

## Section 5 - Policy/Regulation

- (18) [Fees Policy](#).

## Section 6 - Procedures

### Part A - Summary of Roles and Responsibilities

Role	Responsibilities
Student	Applies for a fee adjustment by completing necessary forms Supplies all relevant supporting documentation to demonstrate eligibility for the adjustment Makes all necessary payments before the due date when applying for a Fee Extension.
Senior Adviser, Welfare	Advises eligible students on criteria and eligibility for an Exceptional Circumstance Fee Extension Recommends Exceptional Circumstance Fee Extension to the Senior Coordinator, Student Support & Advocacy
Senior Coordinator, Student Support & Advocacy	Approves Exceptional Circumstance Fee Extensions
Associate Director, Student Life and Wellbeing	Approves Fee Waivers as per this Procedure. Determines applications for review of a decision for Exceptional Circumstances Fee Extension.
VUHQ	Administers Fee extensions using published criteria.
Director, Student Administration	Determines review applications for decisions concerning fee refunds.
Senior Vice-President, Future Students and Planning	Approves refund of tuition fees after Census date for international students (excluding VU English) on extraordinary humanitarian grounds.
General Manager, VU English	Approves refund of tuition fees after course commencement date for VU English students on extraordinary humanitarian grounds. Determines applications for fee extensions (VU English).
Director, VU College	Determines review applications for decisions concerning Fee Extensions (VU English).
Director, Student Services	Determines review applications for decisions concerning fee waivers.
Student Administration	Processes fee adjustments in the Student Management System.

Role	Responsibilities
Finance Services	Pays approved refunds.
Deputy Directors, Flagship Research Institute or Centre, VU Research	Assess and approve Fee Waivers for international higher degree by research students.
Associate Director, Students, VU Sydney	Approves fee refunds and fee extensions.
Campus Director and Principal, VU Sydney	Determines review applications for decisions concerning fee refunds and fee extensions.
Associate University Librarian, Education & Research Services	Determines applications for review of a library fine.

## Part B - Fee extensions

(19) The University acknowledges students may experience exceptional circumstances causing substantial and unforeseen financial hardship during their study. To assist, some students may be eligible for an extension of time to pay their fees.

(20) There are two types of extensions available:

- a. Fee Extension: Allows students an extension to pay fees after the invoice date provided they have:
  - i. Paid 50% of their total fees before the invoice due date; and,
  - ii. Contacted VUHQ and explained their circumstances before the invoice due date.
- b. Exceptional Circumstance Fee Extension: Is available in exceptional circumstances to students who are unable to pay their fees by the due date, or meet their extended payment deadline as a result of an exceptional circumstance.

### Eligibility

#### Fee Extension

(21) The following students are eligible for a fee extension:

- a. International students (HE and VET Certificate I-IV or diploma and above)
- b. HE domestic students who are not eligible to defer their fees via HELP loan (Permanent Residents or New Zealand citizens)
- c. VET domestic students enrolled in Certificate I-IV
- d. VET domestic students enrolled in VET/TAFE Diploma level or higher who are not eligible to defer their tuition fees through a VET Student Loan (VSL). This applies to:
  - i. Permanent Residents other than Humanitarian visa holders
  - ii. New Zealand citizens who do not hold a Special Category Visa (SCV) or do not meet the long term criteria stated by [Study Assist](#).

(22) The following students are not eligible for a fee extension:

- a. HE domestic students who are eligible to defer their fees via a HELP loan:
  - i. Australian citizens
  - ii. Permanent Humanitarian visa holders
  - iii. New Zealand citizens who hold SCV visas
- b. HE students enrolled in non-award courses and cross-institutional study

- c. HE summer or winter enrolments
- d. VET domestic students enrolled in Diploma level or higher who are eligible to defer their tuition fees through a [VET Student Loan \(VSL\)](#). This applies to:
  - i. Australian citizens
  - ii. Permanent Humanitarian visa holders
  - iii. New Zealand citizens who hold a SCV visa and meet the long term criteria stated by [Study Assist](#).

### **Exceptional Circumstance Fee Extension**

(23) The following students are eligible for an exceptional circumstance fee extension:

- a. International students
- b. VET domestic students enrolled in Certificate I-IV
- c. HE domestic Postgraduate Masters students.

## **Application Procedures**

### **Fee Extensions**

(24) Eligible students will make the required payment before the invoice due date. Then, contact VUHQ in order to apply for the fee extension:

- a. Online: [AskVU](#)
- b. Phone: +61 3 9919 6100
- c. In person: at any VUHQ (Student Service Centre).

(25) VU Sydney students should contact the Associate Director, Students (VU Sydney) to apply for a fee extension.

### **Exceptional Circumstance Fee Extension**

(26) Students applying for an Exceptional Circumstance Fee Extension should complete the [Fee Extension Application](#) and make an appointment with a Senior Adviser, Welfare to discuss their application.

(27) The Senior Adviser, Welfare applies the criteria used to assess Exceptional Circumstance Fee Extensions (as stated on the relevant form and updated from time to time), and may consult with the College/s or Teaching Centre/s in which the student is enrolled; Finance; and any other relevant VU business unit to assist in making a recommendation regarding an extension.

## **Recommendation and Approval**

### **Extensions**

(28) Fee extensions are administered via VUHQ using published criteria. Note: in order for VUHQ to process a fee extension, the necessary payment must have been received by VU and allocated to the student's profile.

(29) Applications for fee extensions for VU English students are assessed and approved by the General Manager, VU English.

(30) Applications for fee extensions for VU Sydney students are assessed and approved by the Associate Director, Students, VU Sydney.

## **Exceptional Circumstance Fee Extension**

(31) The Senior Adviser, Welfare makes a recommendation for a fee extension to the Senior Coordinator, Student Support & Advocacy.

(32) The Senior Coordinator, Student Support & Advocacy approves or does not approve the extension.

(33) Student Support notifies the student of the decision and, if relevant, arranges for Student Administration to make the appropriate adjustment within the system.

(34) Student Support will advise the student of their right to request a review and the process to follow in doing so.

(35) Applications for exceptional circumstance fee extensions for VU Sydney students are assessed and approved by the Associate Director, Students, VU Sydney.

## **Review**

(36) A student who is not granted an Exceptional Circumstance Fee Extension may apply to have the decision reviewed by the Associate Director, Student Life and Wellbeing, the Director, VU College (for VU English students); or the Campus Director and Principal (for VU Sydney students).

(37) The application should be submitted within 10 working days of the date on which the notification of the decision was sent to the student. The decision of the Associate Director, Student Life and Wellbeing; Director, VU College (for VU English students); or Campus Director and Principal (for VU Sydney students) is final and there are no further appeal avenues within the University. External appeals may be available depending on the circumstances.

## **Part C - Fee waivers**

(38) The University acknowledges students may experience exceptional circumstances causing substantial and unforeseen financial hardship during their study. To assist, some students may be eligible for a fee waiver to cover the full or partial waiving of fees.

(39) Fee Waivers at VU Sydney fall outside of this Procedure.

## **Eligibility**

(40) Domestic students and Onshore International students (including VU English students) may be eligible to apply for a waiver of fees on the grounds of exceptional circumstances of personal hardship.

(41) International students need to be beyond their first semester to apply for a fee waiver.

(42) The SSAF may be deferred or part-paid in line with government legislation. Waivers may be granted in certain circumstances.

## **Application Procedures**

(43) Students will complete the [Waiver of Tuition Fees on Compassionate or Humanitarian Grounds form](#), attach any supporting documentation, and make an appointment with Student Support to discuss the application.

(44) Student Support applies the criteria used to assess waivers (as stated on the relevant form and updated from time to time), and consults with the College/s or Teaching Centre/s in which the student is enrolled (who may agree to sponsor all or part of the fee); Finance; and any other relevant VU business unit to assist in making a recommendation regarding a waiver.

(45) International Higher Degree by Research students should contact the Office for Research Training, Quality & Integrity to discuss an application for a Fee Waiver.

(46) Where a Flagship Research Institute, VU Research intends to waive partial or full tuition fees for an international Higher Degree by Research student, the processes and criteria in the [Fee Waiver Guidelines for International Higher Degree by Research Students](#) are to be adhered to.

## **Recommendation and Approval**

(47) Student Support makes a recommendation for a fee waiver to the Associate Director, Student Life and Wellbeing.

(48) The Associate Director, Student Life and Wellbeing approves or does not approve the waiver.

(49) Student Support notifies the student of the decision and, if relevant, arranges for Student Administration to make the appropriate adjustment within the system.

(50) Student Support will advise the student of their right to request a review and the process to follow in doing so.

## **Review**

(51) A student who is not granted a waiver may apply to have the decision reviewed by the Director, Student Services.

(52) The application should be submitted within 10 working days of the date on which the notification of the decision was sent to the student. The decision of the Director, Student Services is final and there are no further appeal avenues within the University. External appeals may be available depending on the circumstances.

(53) Review processes for International Higher Degree by Research students are detailed within the [Fee Waiver Guidelines for International Higher Degree by Research Students](#).

## **Part D - Fee Refunds**

(54) Where the student has cause to cancel their enrolment during the year the Director, Student Administration, or their nominee, may approve or authorise the refunding of all or part of any fees and charges.

### **Tuition Fees**

#### **Eligibility - Domestic Students**

(55) HE Students and VET students (at or above Diploma level) who withdraw from their course before the census date are eligible for a refund of paid tuition fees.

(56) HE students and VET students (at or above Diploma level) who withdraw from their course after the census date but before the next census date are not eligible for a refund of the current semester's tuition fees, but will be eligible for a refund of any fees paid towards subsequent semesters.

(57) VET students at Certificate I-IV level are eligible for:

- a. a full refund if they withdraw before the course start date;
- b. a refund of tuition fees if they withdraw after the start date but before the last refund date (4 weeks after the unit start date). Note: the Teaching Centre will determine if the student is entitled to a refund of any materials fees dependent on whether the materials have been provided to the student;
- c. no refund if they withdraw after the last refund date.

## Eligibility - International Onshore Students

(58) Eligibility for full or partial refunds are summarised in [Table 1](#), and detailed below.

(59) References to Census Date for international students in regards to Fee Refunds means the Census Date of the first study period in each Semester/Trimester.

(60) An international student will be entitled to a full refund of tuition fees and any deposit paid for a study period at VU in the following circumstances:

- a. In the event that an offer is withdrawn by the University;
- b. In the event that the University is unable to provide the course (provider default). In this situation, new commencing students will also be eligible for a refund of the application processing fee;
- c. Where a student was unable to attain the level of English language required to commence a course, as set out in the Letter of Offer, and is able to prove that they made reasonable efforts to meet that condition. In this situation, the refund applies only to study periods that have not commenced;
- d. Where a student has been excluded by the University for failure to meet course progression rules and where tuition fees were paid in advance of notification of exclusion (the refund in this subclause will be only for those periods of study not yet started, and will not include the non-refundable deposit);
- e. When illness or disability prevents the student from enrolling in the course;
- f. When the death of a close family member (parent, sibling, spouse or child) occurs, and the Student withdraws from their course before commencement for VU English course, or Census Date for other courses, or after these dates at the discretion of the Senior Vice-President, Future Students and Planning; or
- g. When a political civil or natural event prevents the student from studying or paying tuition fees, before commencement for VU English course, or Census Date for other courses, or after these dates at the discretion of the Senior Vice-President, Future Students and Planning.

## Partial Refunds for International Onshore Students

(61) A student who has paid any tuition fees for a study period for an English language course, and gives written notice of a withdrawal or an inability to study before the commencement date, will be entitled to a refund of tuition fees paid for the study period, less any non-refundable deposit, as set out in the student's written agreement (signed Letter of Offer).

(62) A student who has paid any tuition fees for a study period for a course other than an English language course, and gives written notice of a withdrawal or an inability to study, before the census date, will be entitled to a refund of tuition fees paid for the study period, less any non-refundable deposit, as set out in the student's written agreement (signed Letter of Offer).

(63) Where a student's enrolment has been cancelled for non-payment of tuition fees, the student will be entitled to a refund of any partial payment made less any non-refundable deposit, as set out in the student's written agreement (signed Letter of Offer). Any application fee paid will not be refunded.

(64) Where:

- a. Australian Government authorities refuse to grant a student visa; or
- b. the student visa is not granted in time for the student to start the course; or
- c. a student withdraws their visa application with the Australian Government before the commencement of the Course; or
- d. the student does not submit a visa application; or
- e. the student fails to provide additional information to support their application, as requested by the University

(e.g. statement of purpose or certified documents); or

- f. where the University withdraws an offer based on incorrect, false or incomplete information provided by the student or their agent,

The student will be entitled to receive the total amount of the pre-paid fees the University received for the course in respect of the student minus the lesser of:

- a. 5% of the total amount of pre-paid fees that the provider received in respect of the student for the course before the default day; or,
- b. \$500.

### **No Refunds - International Onshore Students**

(65) Any student who withdraws from their course after Census Date in a semester, or after the commencement of their VU English course, will not be eligible for any refund of Tuition Fees paid for that semester except on extraordinary humanitarian grounds at the discretion of:

- a. The Senior Vice-President, Future Students and Planning, or
- b. In the case of VU English students, the General Manager, VU English.

(66) A student who gives notice in writing of an inability to undertake a course, or withdraws from the course at any time, will not be eligible for a refund of the Application Processing Fee.

### **International Students Who Obtain Permanent Resident Status**

(67) A student who is granted Permanent Resident status will be eligible for a refund of Tuition Fees paid for a semester, less a five hundred dollar (\$500) service charge for the current semester, only if:

- a. The Permanent Resident status is granted on or before the Census Date for that semester, and,
- b. The student presents evidence of their Permanent Resident status to VU International.

(68) Permanent Resident status is recognised from the date officially recognised by the [Department of Home Affairs](#), not the date on which the application for status is made.

(69) A student who is granted Permanent Resident status after the Census Date for a semester will not be eligible for a refund of tuition fees paid for that semester. The student will be classified as an international student for the remainder of that semester.

(70) A student who is granted Permanent Resident status prior to Census Date in a semester will lose their full-fee student place and must re-apply for course entry in competition with other course applicants for either government-supported places, or for domestic fee paying places.

(71) A continuing student who seeks to become a local fee paying domestic student following a grant of Permanent Resident status, may have their pre-paid tuition fees carried over in the appropriate semester.

### **Student Services and Amenities Fees (SSAF)**

(72) HE Students and VET students (at or above Diploma level) who withdraw from their course before the census date are eligible for a refund of SSAF. Eligibility for International Onshore Students are detailed in [Table 1](#).

(73) VET students at Certificate I-IV level are eligible for:

- a. A full refund if they withdraw before the course start date; or,
- b. For a continuing student, a full refund if they withdraw within 28 days from the course study period start date

for the year.

## **Late Fees & Charges**

(74) Students may apply for a refund of the following late fees and charges:

- a. Late enrolment charges;
- b. Re-instatement of enrolment charges;
- c. Late enrolment amendment charges; or,
- d. Late fee payment charges.

(75) Late fees and charges determinations are made within 4 weeks of receipt of the request by Student Administration in consultation with Student Support as appropriate.

## **Ancillary and Materials Fees & Charges**

(76) Students who have withdrawn from any course of study are eligible to have any ancillary or material fees refunded if they have not received the materials. If materials have been supplied, no refund will apply.

## **Overpayments**

(77) Where a Student makes an overpayment of tuition fees, the overpaid amount will be refunded upon application without financial penalty. A memo is required from VU English to support English language overpayments.

## **Refund Application Process**

(78) Students are required to provide documentary evidence in support of an application for a refund.

(79) The relevant form must:

- a. be lodged within 12 months of paying the fee or charge;
- b. provide evidence of the circumstances which are the basis for the claim; and,
- c. provide proof of having paid the fee or charge (a receipt).

(80) Student Administration determine the application and update the Student Management System, where required. Finance Services process approved refund requests.

## **Domestic Students**

(81) Students can apply for a refund by completing the [Refund of VU Course Fees form](#) on the [VU Forms Webpage](#), and submitting it to VUHQ or via email to [AskVU](mailto:AskVU).

## **International Students**

(82) Students can apply for a refund by completing the [Refund of International Student Fees form](#) on the [VU Forms Webpage](#), and submitting it to VUHQ City Flinders Campus or via email to [vui.refunds@vu.edu.au](mailto:vui.refunds@vu.edu.au).

## **VU Sydney Students**

(83) VU Sydney students can apply for a refund by completing the [Withdrawal/Refund Application Form](#) and contacting the Associate Director, Students.

## **Processing of refunds**

(84) Where the Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) premium has been previously paid to the University, it is the responsibility of the student to claim the OSHC refund from their insurer directly.

(85) Where a tuition fee has been paid by a sponsoring body or scholarship agency, any refund payable will be made to the sponsoring body or scholarship agency.

(86) Before a refund can be processed, the funds covering the tuition fee must be available to the University, i.e. cheques and drafts cleared and telegraphic transfers received.

(87) Refunds will be processed within four (4) weeks of receiving a written claim, provided that all the relevant documentation has been received from the student.

(88) A student who is granted intermission or reduced study load will have any Tuition Fees paid held as a credit on their account and treated as a payment against future study periods.

(89) Any notice given must be written in English and actually received by the University.

## **Review**

(90) A student whose refund application is not approved may apply to have the decision reviewed by the Director, Student Administration or the Campus Director and Principal (for VU Sydney students).

(91) The application should be submitted within 10 working days of the date on which the notification of the decision was sent to the student. The decision of the above delegates is final and there are no further appeal avenues within the University. External appeals may be available depending on the circumstances.

## **Refund of library fines**

(92) All library fines issued for recalled or lost items must be paid by the due date.

(93) Generally, no refund of fines will occur unless a fault in the basis for issuing the fine is established.

(94) If the student wishes to dispute the fine on the basis that they believe it was mistakenly issued (i.e. that an item was returned earlier than stated), or apply for a refund on exceptional grounds of financial or personal hardship, they may do so by contacting their most convenient campus library.

(95) The Associate University Librarian, Education & Research Services (or their nominee) determines the matter. Where applicable, a refund will be paid to the student.

## **Part E - Fee Sponsorships**

(96) The University may offer a fee sponsorship (fee discount) for a cohort of students or an individual student if:

- a. Doing so is part of a student recruitment or retention strategy;
- b. Doing so will bolster the University's strategic objectives; or
- c. Doing so is part of a general humanitarian or compassionate action.

(97) Waivers issued by the University, VU International or VU English will be appropriately documented in order to maintain accountability and transparency.

# Section 7 - Supporting Documents

(98) [Fee Waiver Guidelines for International Higher Degree by Research Students](#)

## Status and Details

<b>Status</b>	Historic
<b>Effective Date</b>	15th January 2020
<b>Review Date</b>	15th January 2023
<b>Approval Authority</b>	Vice-Chancellor
<b>Approval Date</b>	7th January 2020
<b>Expiry Date</b>	11th March 2020
<b>Accountable Officer</b>	Trish Roberts Deputy Chief Financial Officer trish.roberts@vu.edu.au
<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Darrel Caulfield Chief Student Officer and Registrar darrel.caulfield@vu.edu.au
<b>Enquiries Contact</b>	Steve Wright Director, Admissions, Enrolments, and Graduations +61 3 9919 4078

## Glossary Terms and Definitions

**"International Student (Onshore)"** - A person who has been granted a visa by the Department of Home Affairs which gives them study rights.

**"Student Services and Amenities Fees (SSAF)"** - A fee charged to support services and amenities to onshore students subject to Government legislation.

**"Domestic Student"** - A person who is an Australian or New Zealand citizen or holder of an Australian Permanent Resident Visa (including humanitarian visas).

**"Fee"** - The price established for delivery of all or part of a student's educational experience at VU, including tuition and non-tuition fees.

**"Fine"** - A disincentive charge levied to encourage students to perform actions in a timely and appropriate manner (e.g. library fines, late enrolment fines.)

**"Non-Tuition Fee"** - The price established for delivering a student's educational experience at VU, excluding tuition fees and fines. These may include ancillary and course materials fees (associated with the provision of services and/or goods retained by the student for use during their course), Student Services and Amenities Fees (SSAF), and other fees and charges (e.g. parking fees). International Students should refer to Section 7(3) of the Education Services for Overseas Students Regulations 2019 for further guidance.

**"Tuition Fee"** - The fees payable by a student to the University which is directly related to the teaching and assessment for a course or unit in which a student is enrolled. International Students should refer to Section 7(2) of the Education Services for Overseas Students Regulations 2019 for further guidance.

**"Refund"** - The repayment of monies owing by the University to a student.