	VSL Tuition Fees Policy
	Version: 1
Department: Sarina Russo Institute	29/04/2022

Policy Statement

Sarina Russo Institute (SRI) is committed to providing an effective, efficient, and timely management process for all Tuition Fees associated with courses on its scope of registration.

Existing fees can be adjusted by the CEO or CFO. New fees must satisfy the following criteria:

- Market comparative fees and charges in line with competitive neutrality
- Operations of the business unit
- Access and equity issues including the ability of the client to afford the charges.

Purpose

This policy and procedure outlines the process for determining tuition fees, fee periods, variations to tuition fees, student's request for withdrawal from a course and refund of tuition fees where a student withdraws on or before the census day, recredit HELP balance.

Scope

SRI is committed to informing stakeholders of all tuition fees (and charges) associated with their enrolment in a registered VET course on scope.

This policy applies to all SRI students who enrol into an eligible course and use VET Student Loans for payment, in any approved courses.

As an approved provider SRI is able to offer students access to VET Student Loans (VSL) where a debt is incurred by the student with the commonwealth government and the loan is for course tuition fees. As VET Student Loans may only cover tuition fees or part of the tuition fee, any other fees and charges must be borne by the student, these are referred to as "gap fees".

This is based on the following principles:

- Transparency – VET tuition fees and charges are transparent, and students have access to the necessary information to make informed decisions regarding their training
- Accessibility – equitable access to publicly funded training
- Procedural fairness – fair and just procedures for the administration of VET fees and charges.


When determining tuition fees, SRG takes into consideration

- Assessing whether the student is academic suited
- Enrolment into the course
- Tuition for the course

Underpinning Legislation and Contractual Requirements

This policy is underpinned by the following:

- *VET Student Loans Act 2016* (Cth)
- *VET Student Loans Rules 2016* (Cth) [VET Student Loans Rules 2016 \(legislation.gov.au\)](http://legislation.gov.au)
- [VET Student Loans Manual for Providers](#)


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- [Non-Tuition Fees.docx \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
- [VET Student Loans Course Caps Indexed Amounts \(for providers\) - Department of Education, Skills and Employment, Australian Government \(dese.gov.au\)](#)

Policy

1. General

- 1.1. SRI reviews all tuition fees and associated charges annually.
- 1.2. Before enrolling a student in an approved course, SRI must give the student information about the tuition fees for the course and any fees other than tuition fees that are payable for the course. These will be clearly published and supplied to the student. The tuition fees will include; - Unit fees - Total course costs - Gap fees (if applicable).
- 1.3. SRI will update the list whenever there is a change to the fees charged for the course. SRI will also use the My Skills website (www.myskills.gov.au) for listing current and up to date fee information, including tuition fees and other fees. This will also be updated whenever there is a change to the fees charged for the course. This information will allow the student to make an informed decision in relation to their enrolment in a course and prior to the student having to make any payments
- 1.4. All tuition fees and associated charges relating to course costs are made readily and easily available to learners via the RTO website www.sri.edu.au .
- 1.5. SR refers to the VET Student Loans course and loan caps. *The VET Student Loans course and loan caps are indexed by using the same indexation factor as applies under Part 5-6 of the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA). For students this will mean that upon obtaining a VET Student Loan, indexation will be applied automatically to both new and continuing students in respect of units with census dates after 1 January.*
- 1.6. At the commencement of the course SRI will send a *VET Student Loan Statement of Covered Fees* which will provide details of the total course fee and how much will be covered by the loan amount.
- 1.7. A *VET Student Loan Fee Notice* for each study period for the course that the student is enrolled in for that fee period is sent to the student at least 14 days prior to census date. The *VET Student Loan Fee Notice* details the following information:
 - a) the provider's name and registration code
 - b) student name, contact details and student identification number
 - c) the cost of unit/s the student is enrolled in for that part of the course
 - d) the census day(s) on which students will incur the debt
 - e) student's USI
 - f) loan fee (if applicable)

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1.7 SRI will send a *Commonwealth Assistance Notice (CAN)* within 28 days after census day, for each study period stating:

- a) Tuition fees for the study period; and
- b) the course for which the student has received VET Student Loans; and
- c) any upfront payments the student has made; and
- d) the total VETSL debt/liability

2. Fee Periods

SRI will determine at least three fee periods for an approved course. Different fee periods may be determined for different courses based on the length of the course. The fee periods of the course will be sequential and together equal the duration of the course. Each fee period will contain one census day. The tuition fees charged will be reasonably apportioned over each fee period. This will ensure students incur debts as they progress through a course and not in one amount at commencement of the course.

It will also allow students to indicate to the department their progression and engagement throughout their course in order to continue to access the loan.

3. Fees Other Than Tuition

SRI will only charge fees other than tuition fees where they are clearly stated prior to enrolment and agreed to with the student. These will include items that are required to complete the course.


SRI will ensure that students understand

- that the fees are not for tuition
- the purpose of the fees
- the student's total liability for the fees
- when and how the fees are to be paid

4. Variation to Tuition Fees

SRI will only vary a published tuition fee for an approved VSL course or a part of a course:

- If the Secretary has given written approval of the proposed variation, or
- If the change:
 - Occurs before the published census date; and
 - Does not disadvantage students enrolled in, or seeking to enrol in that part of the course; and
 - Is necessary to correct an administrative error or deal with a change in circumstances.

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Where there is a variation to tuition fees, SRI will publish the varied information on our website as soon as practicable after making the decision.

5. Variations to tuition fees that disadvantage students

SRI will vary its tuition fees where it disadvantages students only if the Secretary of the Department has approved its request to vary tuition fees.

The request from SRI must be via HITS and the online enquiry form and include:

- the name of the affected unit of study and unit of study code
- the course to which the unit forms a part
- what change is being made
- details of when the provider first became aware of the need to change
- the commencement date for the unit
- the current census day for the unit
- the current tuition fees
- the intended increase in the tuition fee
- the last day a person may enrol in the unit without incurring the increase
- the number of students who are eligible for VET Student Loans and enrolled in the unit of study • whether the students have been advised of the possible variation, and
- why the Secretary should approve the request.

The Secretary will give written notification of the decision, and until this time SRI will not vary its fees.

Refund of Tuition Fees

Where a student withdraws their enrolment in an approved course on or before the census day, they will not incur tuition fees for the course or part of the course, to which the census day applies.

For further information see the [Course-Withdrawal-Enrolment-Cancellation-and-Re-Enrolment-Policy-and-Procedure.pdf \(sri.edu.au\)](#)

This applies to all of the tuition fees for the course or part of the course to which the census day relates. Therefore it includes:

- VET Student Loans covered fees
- any gap fees
- upfront payment of tuition fees
- gap fees or tuition fees paid through a loan from the provider.


Where the student has paid tuition fees upfront to SRI this amount will be refunded to the student.

Re-crediting For Special Circumstances

A student's FEE-HELP balance can be re-credited in special circumstances where the "special circumstances" prevented, or will prevent, the student from completing the requirements of the course or the part of the course.

To apply for special circumstances the student must demonstrate the circumstances were:

- Beyond the student's control, and

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- Did not make their full impact on the student until on, or after, the census day for the course, or the part of the course, and
- Made it impracticable for the student to complete the requirements for the course, or part of the course, during the student's enrolment.

Special circumstances arising from pre-existing conditions

A circumstance that first occurred before the census day may satisfy the special circumstances requirement where it worsens after that day or the full effect or magnitude does not become apparent until after that day.

For example, a person may have an illness or other underlying, pre-existing condition or incapacity prior to the census day for a course, but that condition may worsen, or the person may suffer from an aggravation, deterioration or serious episode, after the census date.

Alternatively, the full implications of a person's condition may not have been apparent until after the census day. This may be because recovery does not go to plan, or the degree of disability or incapacity for study is not fully realised until after the census day.

SRI must consider whether the person's circumstances changed on or after the census day and when the full effect or magnitude of the circumstances became apparent, taking into account any additional circumstances, including continuation of a pre-existing condition that may have affected the person on or after the census day.


Circumstances that made it impracticable to complete a course

The term 'impracticable' is defined as 'not practicable, that which cannot be put into practice with the available means'. SRI will keep this definition in mind when deciding whether a student's circumstances made it impracticable for them to complete a course, or part of a course. In considering whether circumstances are special circumstances because they make it impracticable for the student to complete the requirements of the course, or part of the course, during the student's enrolment, SRI will consider:

- whether the student could do enough private study, or attend training sessions and other activities, or engage online, to meet course requirements
- whether the student could complete any required assessable work, or demonstrate competencies required, and
- whether the student could complete any other requirements arising from the student's inability to do the above

Circumstances that make it impracticable for the person to complete the requirements for their course may include (among other things):

- medical circumstances – for example where a person's medical condition has changed to such an extent that he or she is unable to continue studying
- family or personal circumstances – for example death or severe medical problems within a family, or unforeseen family financial difficulties which affect the student to such an extent that it is unreasonable to expect a person to continue studies, or
- the student's employment related circumstances – for example where a person's employment status or arrangements have changed so the person is unable to continue their studies and this change is beyond the person's control [Rules s 146].

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Requirements for making decisions

SRI will assess the student's application as soon as practicable and will notify the person of its decision and the reasons for making the decision.

Decisions regarding re-crediting a person's FEE-HELP balance are reviewable. Students are advised that the time limit for applying for a review of a decision is 28 days from the day the person first received notice of the decision or such time as the decision maker allows.

Re-crediting by the provider where course not provided to completion

SRI will re-credit a student's FEE-HELP balance if:

- the student has not completed the requirements for the course, or the part of the course, because the provider ceased to provide the course, or the part of the course after it started but before it was completed, and
- it is impractical for the student, under the approved tuition assurance arrangement for the course, to finish the course or an equivalent course.

The amount re-credited will be equal to the amounts of the VET Student Loans that have been used to pay tuition fees for the student for the course, or the part of the course.

If the provider re-credits the student's FEE-HELP balance, the provider must notify the student and the tuition assurance scheme operator of the student for the course, as soon as practicable.

SRI has the discretion to refund any other payments the person made in respect of the course in line with its own policies in deciding whether to refund a student's upfront payment.

Re-crediting by Secretary

The Secretary may act in place of a provider and re-credit a student's FEE-HELP balance where a course has not been provided to completion as the course provider is unable to do so or is being wound up or has been dissolved or where the course provider has unreasonably failed to act.

The Secretary may also re-credit a student's FEE-HELP balance if the Secretary is satisfied of one or more of the following


- the student is not an eligible student
- the student is not a genuine student
- the student does not have a tax file number
- the student does not have a student identifier (that is a USI within the meaning of the Student Identifiers Act 2014)

6. Tuition Protection

Provider Default:

In the event of provider defaults in relation to a student,

- a) within 24 hours of the default occurring: (1) notify students enrolled in the course, in writing, that the course is no longer being provided, and; (ii) give written notice to the VSL Tuition Protection Director of the circumstances of the default;

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- b) SRI will as soon as practicable, update the SRI website to reflect that the course is no longer being provided and will provide tuition protection information;
- c) Within 3 business days of the default occurring, SRI will give the VSL Tuition Protection Director the information required under subsection 66C(3) of the Act.

7. SRI ensures it will, as a replacement provider,

- a) grant course credits for parts of the original course successfully completed by the student, as evidenced by a statement of attainment; or
- b) An authenticated VET transcript prepared by the Registrar (within the meaning of the Student Identifiers Act 2014); and will not charge tuition fees to the student for a replacement component of the replacement course – if tuition fees have been paid for the affected part of the original course;
- c) SRI will enrol the student in the replacement course as soon as practicable; and
- d) Will give written notice within 14 days of the acceptance to the VSL Tuition Protection Director.

Definitions

Approved course	a qualification or course of study that has been approved by the Department of Employment, Skills, Small and Family Business as eligible for VET Student Loans.
VSL	VET Student Loan, a loan program that helps eligible students enrolled in higher level vocational education and training courses at approved course providers pay their tuition fees.
Tuition Protection	Support for VSL students who provider is unable to deliver their course or part of their course

References

VET Student Loans | Manual for Providers | Version 5.1 April 2022