



Australian Government



Thinking about a VET qualification?

VET FEE-HELP 2016

How to pay for your VET qualification

IMPORTANT

The Australian Government has proposed a number of changes that will affect the VET FEE-HELP scheme. Changes include measures to better protect students taking out VET FEE-HELP loans and the removal of the loan fee.

For up-to-date information on these and other proposed changes that affect VET FEE-HELP, visit www.studyassist.gov.au.

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Do I need to pay upfront?

No. If you are an eligible student and apply for VET FEE-HELP, the Government will lend you the amount of the tuition fees for your unit(s) of study which remain unpaid at the end of the census date(s). VET FEE-HELP loans are not paid directly to you; the Government pays the outstanding tuition fees directly to your approved VET FEE-HELP provider (approved provider) on your behalf. VET FEE-HELP is only available to eligible students enrolled at an approved provider.

What is VET FEE-HELP?

VET FEE-HELP is a Government loan scheme that assists eligible students to pay their tuition fees for higher-level vocational education and training (VET) courses (at the diploma-level and above) undertaken at approved providers.

A trial to extend VET FEE-HELP loans to subsidised VET students enrolled in selected Certificate IV qualifications in certain states and territories commenced on 13 January 2014 and will conclude on 31 December 2016.

What is an approved VET FEE-HELP provider?

It is an organisation that has been approved under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (HESA) to offer VET FEE-HELP loans to eligible students. Approved providers that can offer VET FEE-HELP are listed at www.studyassist.gov.au.

Am I eligible for VET FEE-HELP?

You may be eligible for a VET FEE-HELP loan if you:

- are an Australian citizen, or
- a permanent humanitarian visa holder who will be resident in Australia for the duration of your unit(s) of study
- are a full fee paying/fee for service student, or a subsidised student in a state or territory that has implemented subsidised VET FEE-HELP arrangements (contact your approved provider for more information)
- are enrolled in an eligible course at an approved provider, and
- have read the *VET FEE-HELP information for 2016* booklet before you complete and submit the *Request for a VET FEE-HELP loan* form (the form) by the census date.

How do I apply?

You must complete, sign and submit the form (only available from your approved provider) to the appropriate officer at your approved provider. This must be done by the census date of the first unit of study that you wish to pay for with a VET FEE-HELP loan.

You will need to provide your tax file number (or a *Certificate of application for TFN*) to complete the form. If you access a VET FEE-HELP loan, you will have a legal obligation to the Commonwealth to repay your loan.

How much can I borrow?

There is a set maximum amount you can borrow through VET FEE-HELP (and FEE-HELP) over your lifetime. This is known as the FEE-HELP limit. In 2016 the FEE-HELP limit is \$99,389 for most students and \$124,238 for medicine, dentistry and veterinary science students (as defined in HESA). The FEE-HELP limit is indexed on 1 January each year.

Does previous study affect my eligibility for VET FEE-HELP?

Only previous study paid with a VET FEE-HELP (or FEE-HELP) loan will affect the amount of VET FEE-HELP you can borrow.

Is there a loan fee?

If you are a fee paying/fee for service student you will incur a 20 per cent loan fee. This is included in your VET FEE-HELP debt. Subsidised students accessing VET FEE-HELP do not pay the loan fee.

How do I repay the loan and is interest charged?

Your HELP debt is repaid through the tax system. In the 2015-16 income year, you will be required to make a compulsory repayment if your income is \$54,126 or above. The debt is indexed each year to maintain its real value.

Voluntary repayments

Voluntary repayments of \$500 or more receive a 5 per cent bonus. This means your account at the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) will be credited with an additional 5 per cent of the value of your repayment, not 5 per cent of your outstanding debt. For example, if you make a voluntary repayment of \$500, the bonus increases the value of your repayment so your account will be credited with \$525.

Would you like further information?

The *VET FEE-HELP information for 2016* booklet contains comprehensive information about this programme.

YOU MUST read the booklet before applying for a VET FEE-HELP loan. The booklet is available from approved providers or online at www.studyassist.gov.au. You can also call the student enquiry line on **1800 020 108** for more information.

You may also be eligible to receive a student income support payment whilst you are studying.

Visit www.studyassist.gov.au for more information about the eligibility criteria.

