Want to study a course but can’t afford the upfront fees?

You may be able to defer payment of all or part of your course fees with a VET FEE-HELP student loan.

What is VET FEE-HELP?

VET FEE-HELP is a Commonwealth Government loan scheme for the vocational education and training (VET) sector and is part of the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP).

Under this program, eligible full-fee paying students studying in approved high level qualifications at TAFE NSW may defer their tuition fees through a student loan.

Your loan is repaid through the Australian taxation system when you reach the minimum income threshold for repayment. It is not subject to income or assets tests. There is a loan fee of 20%, which compares favourably to commercial loan arrangements. VET FEE-HELP allows you to study now and pay later — after you get the new job or promotion!

Am I eligible?

To be eligible, you must be either an Australian citizen or the holder of an eligible permanent humanitarian visa. You must also provide a tax file number.

Holders of other permanent visas and New Zealand citizens are NOT eligible for VET FEE-HELP assistance.

Which qualifications are eligible for VET FEE-HELP?

All Graduate Certificates and Graduate Diplomas, and most Diplomas and Advanced Diplomas are eligible for VET FEE-HELP.

Ask at your local TAFE NSW college Customer Service Office or go to the TAFE NSW website at www.tafensw.edu.au and follow the link to the VET FEE-HELP courses page.

How do I apply?

It’s easy! You must first read the VET FEE-HELP information booklet which is available from your college or online from the Study Assist website (www.studyassist.gov.au). You then complete your TAFE NSW enrolment as well as the Request for VET FEE-HELP assistance form, available as part of online enrolment or from your college.

When do I repay my debt?

You start repaying your accumulated HELP debt through the tax system when your income is above the minimum repayment threshold. Repayment thresholds are adjusted each year to reflect changes in average weekly earnings. The minimum repayment income threshold for 2013-14 is $51,309.

For more information see Chapter 5 of the VET FEE-HELP information booklet.

Is there a limit to how much I can borrow?

Yes—in 2013, the FEE-HELP limit is $93,204, except for students whose study includes medicine, dentistry and veterinary science courses (that lead to initial registration as practitioners in those fields) where the limit is $116,507.

The FEE-HELP limit is the total amount available to you under both FEE-HELP (in Higher Education) and VET FEE-HELP and is indexed on 1 January each year, in line with movements in the Consumer price index (CPI) to maintain its real value, but otherwise it is interest free. Your HELP debt is separate to any HECS debt you may have.

For more information see Chapter 1 of the VET FEE-HELP Information booklet.
How am I charged?

VET FEE-HELP courses are offered and charged by Units of Study. Each course may have one or many Units of Study, depending on the length of your course and how you are studying (eg regular face-to-face, by distance, online, by block study, part-time etc).

Each Unit of Study has:
- an administrative date, set 10% of the way into the Unit of Study
- a census date, set 20% of the way into the Unit of Study.

You are advised of the fees and dates prior to enrolment. After a census date has passed, TAFE NSW will send you a Commonwealth Assistance Notice (CAN) for that unit. The CAN will provide you with information on your VET FEE-HELP debt for that unit, including the loan fee. If you believe your CAN is incorrect, you should contact your college immediately.

Can I access VET FEE-HELP for two courses at the same time?

Yes—provided you have sufficient FEE-HELP balance and are otherwise eligible.

You need to submit a separate Request for VET FEE-HELP assistance form for each course.

What if I study part-time or online?

VET FEE-HELP is available for part-time and online, as well as full-time study.

I’m a mature age student—can I apply for VET FEE-HELP?

Yes—there are no age restrictions around VET FEE-HELP.

I’m receiving Centrelink benefits. Does this affect the amount of VET FEE-HELP assistance I can access?

No—Centrelink benefits do not affect your eligibility or the amount of VET FEE-HELP assistance you can access.

What is a CHESSN?

A CHESSN is a Commonwealth Higher Education Student Support Number which is allocated to all students when they first access Commonwealth Assistance.

If you already have a CHESSN, please supply that number when you enrol, or if this is the first time you have accessed Commonwealth Assistance, TAFE NSW will provide you with one.

What if I withdraw from my study?

You must withdraw in writing—your college will provide you with a withdrawal form. Depending on the timing of your withdrawal, you may incur a Cancellation fee or you may incur the full VET FEE-HELP debt. If you withdraw:
- on or before the administrative date, there is no penalty
- after the administrative date and on or before the census date, a Cancellation fee of 10% is applied
- after the census date, your VET FEE-HELP debt is incurred.

In some special circumstances, you may be able to apply to have your debt reversed.

For more information see Chapter 4 of the VET FEE-HELP Information booklet.

How do I find out what my total FEE-HELP debt is?

Log in to myUniAssist on the Study Assist website www.studyassist.gov.au. You will need your Commonwealth Higher Education Student Support Number (CHESSN) which was allocated to you when you first accessed Commonwealth Assistance.

Where can I find more information about VET FEE-HELP in TAFE NSW?

Ask at your local college Customer Service Office or go to the TAFE NSW website at www.tafensw.edu.au and click on the VET FEE-HELP link. For general information on VET FEE-HELP, visit the Study Assist website at www.studyassist.gov.au.

The information in this flyer is correct at the time of printing.