Thinking about a VET qualification?

VET FEE-HELP 2015

How to pay for your VET qualification

www.studyassist.gov.au
Important: Proposed changes to the higher education system from 1 January 2016.

The Australian Government has proposed a range of once in a generation reforms that will give students greater freedom to choose where they study. These reforms affect students studying in the Australian higher education system and include changes to Commonwealth subsidies, student contributions and the repayment of HELP loans. It is intended that these changes will give all Australian undergraduate students access to Commonwealth subsidies, creating fairer systems of support and promoting greater freedom of choice. Most changes will commence 1 January 2016 subject to the passage of legislation. For more information about these changes and how they will affect you please visit www.studyassist.gov.au.

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 an Australian 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.

For a trial period, VET FEE-HELP loans are to be extended to subsidised VET students enrolled in selected Certificate IV qualifications (that are specifically part of the trial) in certain states and territories. Visit www.studyassist.gov.au for more information about the eligibility requirements that relate to this trial.

What is an approved VET FEE-HELP provider?
A VET FEE-HELP provider 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 VET providers 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 VET provider for more information)
• are enrolled in an eligible course at an approved VET provider, and
• have read the VET FEE-HELP information for 2015 booklet before you complete and submit the Request for VET FEE-HELP assistance form (the form) by the census date.

How do I apply?

You must complete, sign and submit the form (only available from your approved VET provider) to the appropriate officer at your approved VET 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 2015, the FEE-HELP limit is $97,728 for most students and $122,162 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?

In 2015, 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 2014-15 income year, you will be required to make a compulsory repayment if your income is $53,345 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.

At the time this brochure was developed, the Australian Government had announced, but not legislated, changes to the HELP voluntary repayment bonus (to be in effect from 1 January 2015). Until the relevant legislation is passed, the current arrangements apply.

Would you like further information?

The free VET FEE-HELP information for 2015 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 eligibility criteria.