

# International Student Fee Refund Procedure

Version 3 - Approved 30 March 2023

## Contents

Purpose.....	1
Applicable governance instruments.....	1
Procedure .....	2
1. Background.....	2
2. Eligibility for a Refund.....	2
3. Applying for a Refund .....	3
4. Assessment of Refunds.....	3
5. Payment of Refund.....	5
6. Review of Refund Decision .....	6
Related procedures .....	6
Versions .....	7
Schedule A – Refund Eligibility Table.....	8
Schedule B – Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances Table.....	9

## Purpose

This procedure describes how an international student can be considered for a refund of tuition fees paid for a course and Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC) including:

- a) eligibility for a refund
- b) how to apply for a refund
- c) how applications are assessed
- d) how refunds are paid
- e) how a student can ask for review of a decision in relation to a refund.

## Applicable governance instruments

Instrument	Section	Principles
<i>Student Fees Policy</i>	1 Student Fees 3 Refund of fees and remission of debt	1.1-1.3 3.1-3.2
<i>National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students, 2018 (Cth)</i>	Standard 2: Recruitment of a student Standard 3: Written Agreement	N/A

## Procedure

### 1. Background

The University's *International Student Fee Refund Procedure* provides a student centric, contemporary, and transparent approach to meeting the special needs of our international students who have paid tuition fees for a course and Overseas Student Health Cover but are no longer able to pursue their study. The University requires international students to pay a deposit at the time they accept their course offer. The amount payable is outlined in their Letter of Offer and consists of the following:

- Indicative tuition fee amount for the first study period
- overseas health cover for the length of their student visa if the student uses the University's preferred provider.

The remaining tuition fees for subsequent study periods are to be paid by the due date in accordance with the University's [Key Dates](#).

The objectives of this procedure are to ensure that:

- International students are provided with clear and accessible information regarding the University's refund process.
- Students' requests for refunds are acknowledged and assessed in a timely, fair and equitable manner, and consistent with relevant Federal legislation.
- The University aims to achieve the best possible outcome for students.

### 2. Eligibility for a Refund

- 2.1. An international student will automatically be eligible for a refund if the University is unable to deliver their course of study, including where the course:
- a) does not commence on the agreed start date as outlined in the Offer Letter
  - b) ceases to be offered at any time after the commencement date but before the completion date
  - c) is not provided in full due to conditions imposed on the course by the Commonwealth Register of Institutions and Courses for Overseas Students (CRICOS), or
  - d) has been cancelled or suspended and the student has not withdrawn beforehand.

The Future Student Journey team will notify the student as soon as possible that the course cannot be delivered and offer the student the following options:

- i. to transfer their unspent fees to an alternative course at no additional cost, or
- ii. a 100% refund of their unspent fees and a release letter (to enable them to undertake study with another provider).

- 2.2. A continuing international student (i.e. an international student who has completed 50 credit points of study) who has funds in credit **or** has had an application of remission approved will also be automatically eligible for a refund. See the *Remission of Student Debt Procedure* for further information on how continuing international students can apply for remission.
- 2.3 In all other cases, an application for refund must be made. To be eligible to make an application, the student must be a commencing international student (i.e. an international student who is yet to complete 50 credit point of study (Pass or Fail)).

### 3. Applying for a Refund

- 3.1. A student wanting to apply for a refund should submit an application as soon as possible, because depending on the circumstances, the refundable amount can decrease over time (see section 4.5).
- 3.2. To apply for a refund, the student must complete a 'Fee Refund Request Form' (available through the Student Portal). For the application to be considered complete, it must:
- a) outline the reasons for requesting the refund which might include (see section 4.5):
    - the student intends not to commence their course, withdraws from their course, or does not meet their visa conditions
    - the student does not meet the [Genuine Temporary Entrant \(GTE\) requirement](#) (due to their potential circumstances in Australia, value of the course to their future, their immigration history, the intention of their parent, legal guardian or spouse if they are a minor, or any other relevant matters), is unable to obtain a student visa or is unable to meet the conditions in their Offer Letter
    - the student did not commence their course or progress in a course of study due to compassionate or compelling circumstances.
  - b) Include all relevant supporting documentation that the student would like considered, and that supports the reason/s for requesting a refund. This might include medical documentation, death certificate, bank statement. See Schedule B (page 9).
  - c) Provide bank account details (see section 5)
  - d) declare that the application and any supporting documents are truthful and genuine.
- 3.3. If the student is transferring to another university or provider, they must also complete a 'Request for Course Withdrawal Form' or a 'Request for Release Form'. See the *International Student Request Transfer Procedure* for further information. The outcome of this application must be finalised first before the refund can be assessed.
- 3.4. If the student is still overseas and their health cover was arranged by the University, the student should include a request for refund of their health cover in their Fee Refund application. Otherwise, a refund for this will need to be requested directly from their health cover provider.
- 3.5. The refund assessment process will start when the Fees Team receives the completed Fee Refund Request Form.

### 4. Assessment of Refunds

- 4.1. Applications for refunds are assessed by the Fees Team. Applications must be assessed in a timely manner (normally within 28 days upon receipt of a complete application).
- 4.2. When assessing the application, the Fees Team may ask the student to provide additional supporting evidence (for example a medical certificate) which may result in the assessment time frame being longer than 28 days. A student can also provide further documentation while their application is being assessed.
- 4.3. The following general principles apply to the assessment of all refunds:
- a) For packaged offers (i.e. English Language Course + degree course), each course of the package is considered as a separate course for refund purposes and will be assessed accordingly.
  - b) A 'course' for the English Language Centre (ELC) means the total study period as outlined in the Offer Letter.

- c) Any amount paid over the required deposit outlined in the Offer Letter (i.e. overpayment) will be refunded in full, minus any applicable fees (see section 5.5)
- d) Students who are unable to commence their studies in their first study period may be eligible to defer their place to the next available course intake. If a deferral is granted, all paid tuition fees will be transferred to the new study period.
- e) If a student has multiple course offers (i.e. deferred offers), a refund will be assessed against the last accepted course offer.
- f) Students who change their international visa sub-class will be considered a withdrawal for refund purposes.
- g) No refund will be given in the following circumstances:
  - i. Where the information or documentation provided by the student or their agent cannot be independently verified, or the student is considered to be non-genuine based on the provision of fraudulent or misleading documentation or evidence.
  - ii. Where the funds received have involved fraud and resulted in a chargeback.
  - iii. Where no Fee Refund Request Form is received.

4.4. Refund for quota courses (i.e. courses that have a limited number of places available such as Medicine and Paramedicine) will also be assessed in accordance with the student's Letter of Offer which will also detail the terms and conditions relating the funds, including that the deposit might be non-refundable..

4.5. The refundable amount depends on why the refund is requested and when the request is submitted (see Schedule A) and is calculated as follows:

- a) **If the student does not commence their course, withdraws from their course, or does not meet their visa conditions:**
  - i. Students who submit a Request for Refund before the first day of their first study period will be entitled to a 100% refund less a \$500 administrative fee. A bank fee may also apply (See section 5.5)
  - ii. Students who submit a Request for Refund on or after the first day of their first study period but before or on the census date of their first study period will be entitled to a 50% refund. A bank fee may also apply (See section 5.5)
  - iii. Students who submit a Request for Refund after the census date of their first study period will receive no refund.

- b) **If the student does not meet the GTE requirement, is unable to obtain a student visa or is unable to meet the conditions in Offer Letter:**

Students who submit a Request for Refund at any stage during the first study period due to not meeting the GTE requirement (see section 3.2.a), being unable to obtain a student visa or because they are unable to meet the conditions outlined in their offer letter, will be entitled to a 100% refund. A bank fee may also apply (see section 5.5)

- c) **If the student is granted a deferral to the next available intake of their course, but then withdraws:**

- i. Students who submit a Request for Refund before or on the census date of the deferred study period will be entitled to a 50% refund. A bank fee may also apply (see section 5.5)

- ii. Students who submit a Request for Refund after the census date of the deferred study period will receive no refund.

**d) If the student did not commence their course or progress in a course of study due to 'compassionate or compelling circumstances':**

- i. The University may approve a Request for Refund at any stage during their first study period if the student can demonstrate that compassionate or compelling circumstances beyond the student's control impacted on their ability to commence or progress in a course of study. The amount refunded will normally be 100%, less a \$500 administrative fee. A bank fee may also apply (see section 5.5)

Examples of compassionate/compelling circumstances include, but are not limited to:

- ii. serious illness, injury or death of the student
- iii. serious illness or death of an immediate family member
- iv. severe and unexpected financial hardship that has impacted the student's ability to pay their tuition fees
- v. major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country of the student and is likely to impact the student's ability to commence or continue their studies

Circumstances within the control of the student or circumstances that have not directly impacted on the student's capacity to commence their course or progress in a course of study will not be considered as compassionate or compelling circumstances, for example:

- i. failure of a student to understand or seek clarification of university requirements as specified in its policies, processes and rules (for example, if a student misreads the University's [Key Dates](#) page or information outlined in their Offer Letter)
- ii. any delay by the student in checking correspondence sent by the University
- iii. conflicts of priorities which are to be expected in the normal course of the student's study, for example unable to commence/continue study due to family or work commitments.
- iv. Events that could have been prevented, for example failing to submit a Request for Refund by the due date.

4.6. Once the application has been assessed, the Fees Team will notify the student in writing of the refund decision. This will include the following:

- a) the outcome and reason
- b) the amount to be refunded, if applicable
- c) the timeframe for the funds to be returned, if applicable
- d) the process for a review (if the student is dissatisfied with the decision). See Section 6.

## **5. Payment of Refund**

5.1. The University's Finance Team will refund to one of the following accounts:

- a) the source account that was used to pay the tuition fees or health cover.
- b) the student's bank account (in the event that the source account does not belong to the student, or the fees cannot be returned to the source account).

5.2. The account provided on the Fee Refund Request Form must be verified by the Fees Team before

the refund can be paid. The Fees Team will notify students by email if a bank account cannot be verified and will request the student to provide a copy of their bank statement confirming the account is their own.

- 5.3. The Fees Team may suspend or cancel the payment of a refund if the account details cannot be verified.
- 5.4. Refunds paid into overseas bank accounts will be converted from Australian dollars into the currency of the country where the bank account is held. If the local currency is not available, the amount will be converted into US dollars.
- 5.5. Refunds paid into an overseas bank account will attract a bank fee. This will be deducted from the refund amount. A student's overseas financial institution may also charge other amounts, including but not limited to, currency conversion fees.

## 6. Review of Refund Decision

- 6.1. If a student is dissatisfied with the decision in relation to their refund, the student can request a review by the Student Fees Team on the following ground:
  - a) That there has been a procedural or administrative error in reaching the decision on the refund (for example the final refund figure has been miscalculated, or there has been an error in assessing the refund)
- 6.2. To request review, the student will need to email [U.Connect@utas.edu.au](mailto:U.Connect@utas.edu.au) within 28 calendar days from the date the refund decision was sent:
  - a) explaining the grounds for review, and
  - b) providing evidence in support.
- 6.3. Requests for review will only be considered if a student can provide new or additional supporting documentation (outside of what was originally provided). The Fees Team may also ask the student to provide additional documentation or evidence.
- 6.4. The Fees Team will promptly review the refund decision and notify the student in writing of the outcome and reason (normally within 28 days of the request).
- 6.5. If the student's request for review is successful, the notification will include:
  - i. the amount to be refunded,
  - ii. the timeframe for the funds to be returned.
- 6.6. If the request for review is unsuccessful, the student will be advised that they can request review by an external body, such as [Ombudsman Tasmania](#).

## Related procedures

*International Student Tuition Fee Procedure*

*International Student Transfer Request Procedure*

*Remission of Student Debt Procedure*

Version 3 – Approved 30 March 2023

Definitions and acronyms can be found at: <https://www.utas.edu.au/policy/policy-definitions>

Related policy and procedures can be found at: <https://www.utas.edu.au/policy>

## Versions

<u>Version</u>	Action	Approved by	Business Owner	Approval Date
1	Approved	Chief Marketing Officer	Executive Director, Student Operations	21 Dec 2020
2	Approved	Vice-President, Strategy, Marketing and Finance	Director Student Systems and Administration	30 Mar 2022
3	Approved	Vice-President, Strategy, Marketing and Finance	Manager, Student Administration	30 Mar 2023

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Version 3 – Approved 30 March 2023

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## Schedule A – Refund Eligibility Table

<i>Time of Withdrawal</i>	<i>Circumstances</i>						
	<b>1<sup>st</sup> Study Period</b>						
	<i>Student</i> <sup>2</sup>						<i>University</i>
	Does not commence  Withdraws from course	Does not meet GTE requirement or is unable to obtain a visa  Unable to meet conditions in Offer Letter	Documentation found to be fraudulent or unable to be independently verified	Non-compliance with visa conditions	Granted a deferral to a future study period but then withdraws from course	Special Circumstances <sup>4</sup>	Any circumstances where the University is at fault
<i>Before first day of first study period</i> <sup>1</sup>	100% less \$500 administrative fee	100%	0%	100% less \$500 administrative fee	50%	May apply	100%
<i>On or after first day of first study period, but before or on census date</i>	50%	100%	0%	50%	50%	May apply	100%
<i>After census date</i>	0%	100%	0%	0%	0%	May apply for Remission	100%
	<b>From 2<sup>nd</sup> Period of study</b> <sup>3</sup>						
	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

1. Non-quota courses only. If the course has quota limit, please refer to the Offer Letter.
2. Full or partial refunds due to student related circumstances may also incur a bank fee which will be deducted from the final amount to be refunded.
3. Refer to *Remission of Student Debt Procedure*.
4. Supporting evidence required

Version 3 – Approved 30 March 2023

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## Schedule B – Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances Table

	<i>Circumstances</i>	<i>Supporting documentation required<sup>1</sup></i>
a	Serious illness, injury or death of the student	Medical certificate or death certificate
b	Serious illness or death of an immediate family member (parent or sibling)	Medical certificate or death certificate, and evidence to prove student's relationship to the family member
c	Severe and unexpected financial hardship that has impacted the student's ability to pay their tuition fees	Bank statement and letter from authorised officer at student's financial institution
d	Major political upheaval or natural disaster in the home country of the student and is likely to impact the student's ability to commence or continue their studies	Personal statement from student only, noting that such major events would be identified from news or social media

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 1.The University reserves the right to request additional supporting documentation (for example death certificate with a QR code) to ensure a fair and transparent assessment.

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