

VET STUDENT LOANS INFORMATION SHEET

The VET Student Loans program is an Australian Government loan program that helps eligible students enrolled in approved courses at diploma level or above, at approved course providers pay their tuition fees. The loan has income-contingent repayment arrangements, which means you only need to make repayments if you are earning above the minimum repayment threshold. You can make voluntary repayments at any time.

If you are an eligible student, the Department of Education and Training (the department) may approve your VET Student Loan for an approved course. The department will pay your loan directly to your approved course provider. You will be responsible for any gap amount in the tuition fees, which are not covered by the loan. You will owe a debt to the Australian Government for the loan until it is repaid to the Commonwealth, which will be managed by the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

BEFORE APPLYING FOR A VET STUDENT LOAN, YOU MUST READ THE VET STUDENT LOAN INFORMATION BOOKLET AVAILABLE AT ANY PARTNERS IN TRAINING CAMPUS OR ONLINE AT www.studyassist.gov.au.

Applying for a VET Student Loan

You may wish to seek independent financial advice before applying for a loan. If you are under 18 years old, you must have a parental consent form signed by a responsible parent or have evidence of the assessment of receipt of youth allowance.

If you wish to apply for a VET Student Loan, you must complete the *Request for a VET Student Loan eCAF* by the census date. You must first enrol with Partners in Training Australia (RTO Code 21837) and indicate you wish to access a VET Student Loan. Partners in Training (PTA) will then give the department your enrolment information, including the nearest applicable census day, through the eCAF system.

You will then receive an email from the department allowing you to sign into the eCAF system. Once you sign-in, you will need to verify the pre-populated information and complete the mandatory fields. You must then **wait at least two full business days** after you have enrolled in your studies before submitting the eCAF. You must submit the eCAF on or before the first census day for which you would like the loan to apply.

Once you submit your eCAF, you will receive an email confirming your loan approval and providing you with a copy of your completed form. You should keep this form for your records.

Eligibility for a VET Student Loan

You are eligible for a VET Student Loan if you enrol with PTA (as an approved VET Student Loan provider) if:

1. You are:
 - a. an Australian citizen; or
 - b. a New Zealand citizen, who meets all of the following:
 - i. holds a Special Category Visa (SCV); and
 - ii. have been usually resident in Australia for at least 10 years; and
 - iii. was a dependent child aged under 18 years of age when you first began to be usually resident in Australia; and
 - iv. has been in Australia for periods totalling 8 years during the previous 10 years, and
 - v. has been in Australia for periods totalling 18 months during the previous 2 years; or
 - c. a permanent humanitarian visa holder, who is usually resident in Australia.
2. Your FEE-HELP balance (the amount of your FEE-HELP limit you have left) is more than \$0. This means you have enough FEE-HELP limit remaining for your proposed studies to be covered by the loan.
3. You are enrolled with us in an approved course and have enrolled in accordance with the application requirements.
4. You are studying the approved course primarily at a campus in Australia
5. You have been assessed by PTA as **academically suited** to undertake the approved course on the basis of either:
 - a. providing your Australian Year 12 Certificate; or
 - b. providing a copy of a diploma that has been awarded for the completion of the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme; or
 - c. providing evidence of successful completion of an Australian Qualifications Framework Certificate IV or higher qualification (where the language of instruction is English), or at a level in a framework that preceded the AQF that is equivalent to level 4 or above in the AQF; or
 - d. providing evidence of successful completion overseas qualifications which have been assessed by a Federal, State or Territory government agency as equivalent or comparable to a qualification at level 4 or above in the Australian Qualifications Framework, or a qualification at a level in a framework that preceded the AQF that is equivalent to level 4 or above in the AQF; or
 - e. displaying competence at or above Exit Level 3 in the Australian Core Skills Framework in both reading and numeracy through an approved Language, Literacy and Numeracy test.

In addition, Partners in Training must reasonably believe you show commitment to complete the course.

6. You meet the Tax File Number (TFN) requirements
7. You have a Unique Student Identifier (USI) or are otherwise exempt
8. You have been given all the required documents to Partners in Training and submitted the loan application form by the first census day no less than two business days after enrolling.

Original evidence you must provide to support your eligibility

If you would like to apply for a VET Student Loan, you must bring to the Partners in Training the **original or a certified copy of the original** of your

- Current Australian Passport; or
- Full birth certificate issued by an Australian Registry of Births, Deaths and Marriages (RBDM); or
- Citizenship certificate if you are born in Australia on or after 20 August 1986 and neither parent was an Australian citizen; or
- Permanent humanitarian visa confirmed by Home Affairs' Visa Entitlement Verification Online (VEVO) (The email should be sent from VEVO to the designated PTA email address directly); or
- Evidence that you began living in Australia as a child at least 10 years before applying for the loan if you have a New Zealand SCV holder.

You must also provide an original or certified copy of the original of your Australian year 12 certificates or evidence of successful completion of an Australian Qualification Framework (AQF) Certificate IV or higher qualification (where the language of instruction is English). If you are unable to provide this document, you must complete the VETASSESS assessment tool to assess Language, Literacy and Numeracy levels.

VET Student Loans fees and charges

A VET Student Loan may only be used to pay for all or part of your tuition fee. In addition to the VET Student Loan tuition fee, a 20% loan fee applies to full fee paying/ fee for service students (which does not count towards your HELP limit). A 20% loan fee will not be charged to Government subsidised students under the *Skills First* Program accessing VET Student Loans.

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There is a limit to how much a student can borrow. Other than for specified exceptions (e.g. aviation), there will be three loan cap bands of \$5,264, \$10,528 and \$15,793 in 2020, which will apply irrespective of the course delivery. In addition, the amount of the loan cannot be greater than your remaining FEE-HELP balance.

If your qualification costs more than the loan amount you could borrow, it does not prevent you from enrolling in that qualification. Rather, it is a maximum loan amount the government is willing to provide you as a student. You will be required to pay the difference to Partners in Training in accordance with the payment arrangements. Partners in Training will provide you with information regarding payment arrangements, tuition fees above the ceiling of the loan before you enrol in the course.

VET Student Loans cannot be used for additional study costs such as admin fees, materials fees, training resources, charges (such as for Recognition of Prior Learning) or accommodation. These additional costs must be paid by you to Partners in Training prior to course commencement.

You have a number of options to pay your fees and charges other than through the VET Student Loan scheme which are set out in detail in Partners in Training's Student Fees and Charges Policy and Procedures available at any Partners in Training campus or on our website.

A schedule of indicative VET Student Loan fees (including tuition fees, materials fees and admin fees) is available on our website at <http://www.partnersintraining.edu.au/student-info/vet-student-loans/> but the fees charged may vary depending on individual circumstances at the time of enrolment. The exact VET Student Loan fees that will be charged to you are set out in the Course Information Sheet for the relevant qualification and provided to you at the Partners in Training Information Session.

Partners in Training's Statement of VET Tuition Assurance is available on our website at <http://www.partnersintraining.edu.au/student-info/vet-student-loans/>.

Census dates and withdrawal

The census date is the most important date for you to know about. It is the deadline set by Partners in Training and the last day you can:

- complete the eCAF to access a VET Student loan, or
- withdraw your enrolment without incurring the cost or debt for that course.

You will be liable to a portion of the tuition fees associated with the census day. A schedule of VET Student Loans census dates is available on our website at <http://www.partnersintraining.edu.au/student-info/vet-student-loans/>.

You may withdraw your VET Student Loan enrolment at any time in accordance with Partners in Training's withdrawal policy and procedures set out in our Student Handbook. Withdrawal **on or before** the census date will result in you not incurring a VET Student Loan debt and/or receiving a refund for any up-front tuition fee payments made on or before the census date. If you withdraw or cancel your enrolment **after** the census date for a Unit of Study, you will still incur a VETSL debt that you are required to repay to the Commonwealth, regardless of whether you attend training sessions or submit assessments. If you made an upfront payment, you are **NOT** eligible for a refund of that payment.

If you failed the unit or withdrew after the census day because you became seriously ill or because of other special circumstances, you can apply to your provider to have your VETSL debt removed.

Partners in Training's withdrawal policy and procedure is set out in the Student Handbook available at any Partners in Training campus or on our website at <https://www.partnersintraining.edu.au/resources/>.

Engagement and progression requirements under VET Student Loans scheme

You must meet engagement and progression requirements by completing a Progression Form to continue assessing a VET Student Loan. You are required to complete a Progression Form issued by PTA in the eCAF system within 2 weeks of receiving the invitation email. There are 3 fixed progression points throughout the year, at four-month intervals. Failure to submit the Progression Forms may impact your VSL payments.

Important information in relation to the VET Student Loans scheme

It is important that you understand the following information in relation to the VET Student Loans scheme:

- Your VET Student Loan becomes part of your accumulated VETSL debt and must be paid back at the relevant repayment rate when your repayment income is above the compulsory repayment threshold. The compulsory repayment threshold is adjusted each year and is \$45,881 for the 2019-20 income year. Repayments made through the Australian taxation system are called 'compulsory repayments' and continue until you have repaid your whole debt.
- You must meet the eligibility criteria to be eligible for a VET Student Loan. You will need to supply information to Partners in Training to prove that you meet the eligibility criteria.
- At least twice each calendar year for the duration of your course, you are required to confirm your continued engagement in your course of study. Your approved provider will manage this engagement and progression activity using the Department of Education and Training's electronic Commonwealth Assistance Form (eCAF) system. Your ongoing access to a VET Student Loan is dependent upon you demonstrating that you are still engaged in and progressing through your course.
- You will incur your liability to pay tuition fees for each part of your course on the census day for that part of your course.
- If you do not wish to incur a liability for that part of the course you must withdraw your enrolment in that part of the course, **before** the census day. You must withdraw **in writing** and in line with Partners in Training's withdrawal procedure.
- Full fee paying/fee for service students will incur a 20 per cent loan fee on their VET Student Loan. Students enrolled in a diploma and advanced diploma level course whose enrolment is subsidised by a state or territory government do not incur a loan fee.
- The amount of a VET Student Loan for a course is capped. The loan may not be sufficient to cover all the tuition fees for a course. Partners in Training must send you a written notice of the amount of your course tuition fees covered by the loan and any gap fees required to be paid by you. The information must be sent to you by the first census day for your course. You are responsible for paying the gap fee as you progress through your course.
- Information about tuition fees covered by the VET Student Loans program, and any other fees payable for the course, and information on how to withdraw before the census day without incurring fees, will be provided to you by Partners in Training prior to your application.
- You must notify PTA of any change of your contact details, such as your contact number, email address, home address and so on.
- The Department may contact you to verify your enrolment in the course at any time.
- Before applying for a VET Student Loan, You **MUST** read the VET Student Loans Information Booklet available at any PTA campus or online at <https://www.studyassist.gov.au/vet-students/vet-student-loans>.