

2023 Guidelines About Fees

Skills First Program

Department of Education and Training

PURPOSE

These Guidelines describe requirements about tuition fees and other fees associated with government subsidised training and the financial and accountability requirements for fees.

These Guidelines apply to all enrolments in Skills First subsidised training and must be read in conjunction with the VET Funding Contract (the Contract).

1. GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- 1.1 The Training Provider is not required to charge a minimum or maximum tuition fee for Skills First subsidised training. However, the Training Provider must grant any applicable Fee Waiver in accordance with Section 2 and any applicable Fee Concession in accordance with Section 3 of these Guidelines.

Statement of Fees

- 1.2 Prior to the commencement of training, the Training Provider must give each Skills First Student a Statement of Fees that includes, at minimum:
- the code, title and currency of the program;
 - the total cost to them for their program, taking into account any Fee Concession or Fee Waiver entitlement;
 - the approximate value of the government contribution expressed in dollars; and
 - any other applicable fees, such as student services, amenities, goods or materials.

VET Student Loans

- 1.3 Where a Skills First Student is also accessing VET Student Loans to pay their tuition fee, the Training Provider must inform the Department and the Skills First Student if it charges a tuition fee in excess of its published standard tuition fee.

2. FEE WAIVERS

- 2.1 The Training Provider must grant a Fee Waiver in the circumstances set out in clause 2.3 of these Guidelines.
- 2.2 The Training Provider must report all Fee Waivers it grants in accordance with the Victorian VET Student Statistical Collection Guidelines, or as otherwise instructed by the Department.
- 2.3 The Training Provider must sight and retain copies of any evidence (where required) of a student's entitlement to the Fee Waiver prior to the commencement of training, in accordance with the following.

	Circumstance:	The Training Provider must grant a Fee Waiver if:	If the student is enrolling with:	The Training Provider must sight:	The Training Provider must retain:
a)	Judy Lazarus Transition Centre	The student is from the Judy Lazarus Transition Centre (as a prisoner within the meaning of the <i>Corrections Act 1986</i>).	Any training provider	Written confirmation from the management of the Judy Lazarus Transition Centre.	A copy of the written confirmation from the management of the Judy Lazarus Transition Centre.
b)	Young people on community based orders	The student is required to do training under a community based order made under the <i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (the CYF Act)</i> .	Any training provider	Written confirmation from the relevant Youth Justice Unit of the Victorian Department of Justice and Community Safety that the student is required to do training under a community based order made under the	A copy of the written confirmation from the relevant Youth Justice Unit of the Victorian Department of Justice and Community Safety.

	Circumstance:	The Training Provider must grant a Fee Waiver if:	If the student is enrolling with:	The Training Provider must sight:	The Training Provider must retain:
				<i>Children, Youth and Families Act 2005 (the CYF Act).</i>	
c)	Skills First Youth Access Initiative	The student is referred to training by the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, the Department of Justice and Community Safety, or a referring agency. ¹	Only a TAFE Institute, Dual Sector University or Learn Local Organisation	A validly endorsed referral form from either the Department of Families, Fairness and Housing, the Department of Justice and Community Safety, or a referring agency.	The original referral form (and the Training Provider must return a copy of the form to the Department or referring agency).
d)	Free TAFE for Priority Courses	The student is enrolling in a program on the Free TAFE for Priority Courses List and meets the requirements to receive the Fee Waiver as per Clause 16 of Schedule 1 of the Contract.	Only a TAFE Institute, Dual Sector University	N/A	A copy of the completed Evidence of Eligibility and Student Declaration Form where the student has responded to questions about the Free TAFE for Priority Courses initiative.
e)	Enrolment in a Free TAFE Short Course.	The student is undertaking a Free TAFE Short Course as identified on the Funded Programs Report.	Only a TAFE Institute or Dual Sector University	N/A	N/A

3. FEE CONCESSIONS

- 3.1 The Training Provider must allow Fee Concessions on standard tuition fees in accordance with these Guidelines.
- 3.2 If a student is entitled to a Fee Concession, the Training Provider must charge no more than 20 per cent of its published standard tuition fee, being the fee that the Training Provider would have charged a non-Fee Concession Skills First Student in the same program at that time.
- 3.3 The Training Provider must check a student's entitlement for a Fee Concession as part of enrolment and prior to the commencement of training.
- 3.4 Where the Training Provider does not charge all fees for an enrolment in a program in one instance (for example, if fees are charged for each semester or year of study), then after initially checking a student's Fee Concession entitlement as part of enrolment, the Training Provider must re-check their entitlement when an invoice is issued to the student for new fees.
- 3.5 Where the Training Provider offers a student a 'payment plan' (meaning that the student is charged all fees for an enrolment in a program in one instance, but the Training Provider makes an arrangement with the student to pay in instalments), the Training Provider does not need to re-check Fee Concession entitlement each time a new invoice is issued for an instalment amount.

¹ A referring agency is defined for this purpose as an organisation that is based in the State of Victoria that currently receives funding or is contracted by the Victorian Government or the Commonwealth Government to provide services to children, youth or families.

- 3.6 If a student’s Fee Concession entitlement expires before they complete all hours for which they have paid tuition fees, they are still entitled to receive a Fee Concession for those hours.
- 3.7 The Training Provider must report all Fee Concessions it grants in accordance with the Victorian VET Student Statistical Collection Guidelines.

Fee Concession Entitlement

- 3.8 For enrolments in Skill Sets and programs at the Certificate IV level and below, the Training Provider must apply a Fee Concession to a student who, prior to the commencement of training, holds a current and valid:
- Health Care Card issued by the Commonwealth;
 - Pensioner Concession Card; or
 - Veteran’s Gold Card.

A dependant spouse or dependant child of a card holder is also entitled to the Fee Concession.

Evidence of Fee Concession Entitlement

- 3.9 The Training Provider must sight and retain copies of evidence of a student’s entitlement to a Fee Concession. Evidence must be kept in a way that enables the Department to confirm the student’s Fee Concession entitlement for audit or review purposes and must meet the record keeping requirements set out in Clause 5.3 of these Guidelines.

The Training Provider may sight and retain evidence of Fee Concession entitlement by:

	Sighting	Retaining
a)	the original card, or correspondence from the card issuer confirming a concession is granted to the individual and they may commence claiming their entitlement.	a copy of the original card or correspondence, indicating the date it was sighted. The copy must show the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> concession holder’s name; card number; ‘valid from’ or card start date; and expiry date of the concession entitlement.
OR		
b)	the concession card displayed on a Digital Wallet through a Centrelink Express Plus mobile application on the cardholder’s mobile device. The digital card may not be sighted via a screen shot of the card that is e-mailed or otherwise reproduced.	a written declaration attached to the student’s file stating that the digital concession card has been sighted, showing the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> name of the authorised delegate who sighted the card; date the card was sighted; concession holder’s name; and card number.
OR		
c)	the equivalent record of a concession card as extracted from Centrelink Confirmation eServices by the Training Provider.	an extract from Centrelink Confirmation eServices showing the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> date the extract was made; concession holder’s name; and card number.
OR		

d)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> confirmation from a Gateway Service Provider² that it has connected to the Commonwealth Government’s Document Verification Service (the DVS)³ and verified that an individual’s name and concession card number match a current and valid record of concession entitlement in the DVS; an information from the student about the type of concession card they hold, to confirm it is a type accepted by the Department. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a transaction record generated by securely logging in to the administrative platform provided by the Gateway Service Provider, that shows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the individual’s name; and that their name and concession card number were verified to match a current and valid concession entitlement in the DVS; and a record of the type of concession card the student holds, attached to the student’s file⁴.
----	--	--

3.10 The Training Provider may allow a student a grace period to provide evidence of a Fee Concession entitlement if they do not immediately provide it as part of enrolment. If the Training Provider allows such a grace period, it must have a documented business process for how it is applied, and this must be auditable. When a student is given such a grace period, the Training Provider must retain a record of the concession card ‘valid from’ or start date to show that the student’s evidence of a Fee Concession entitlement was valid at the time of commencement of training.

Fee Concession entitlement under particular Government initiatives

3.11 The following students are entitled to receive a Fee Concession whether or not they hold one of the forms of Fee Concession entitlement specified in Clause 3.8.

	Under the:	a student can receive a Fee Concession for:	if they:	and the Training Provider must sight and retain:
a)	Indigenous Completions Initiative	an enrolment in a program at any level.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> self-identify as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent (and are reported as such through the ‘Indigenous Status Identifier’ field of the Student Statistical Report). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a copy of the enrolment form on which the individual self-identified as indigenous.
b)	Asylum Seeker VET Program	An enrolment in a Skill Set and a program at Certificate IV level and below.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> are referred to training by the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre or the Australian Red Cross. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a validly endorsed Referral to Government Subsidised Training – Asylum Seekers form from the Asylum Seeker Resource Centre; or a validly endorsed Referral to Government Subsidised Training – Asylum Seekers form from the Australian

² A Gateway Service Provider is an organisation authorised to direct information match requests to and from the Commonwealth Government’s Document Verification Service (the DVS).

³ The DVS is a national online system that allows organisations to compare an individual’s identifying information with a government record.

⁴ If the student is a dependant spouse or dependant child of the concession card holder and the concession is verified for the primary card holder, also make a note on the student’s file describing the student’s relationship to the card holder.

	Under the:	a student can receive a Fee Concession for:	if they:	and the Training Provider must sight and retain:
				Red Cross Victims of Human Trafficking Program.
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> are seeking to enrol at any training provider. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> confirmation the student holds a valid Visa type obtained by using the Commonwealth Visa Entitlement Verification Online.

4. REFUNDS

- 4.1 Prior to enrolment, the Training Provider must give each student a clear refund policy that is fair, reasonable and covers scenarios relating to withdrawal by the student, program cancellation, closure of the Training Provider and any other reasonable matter and that meets the standards of the Training Provider's regulator.
- 4.2 In addition to Clause 4.1, enrolments in programs eligible for VET Student Loans are subject to VET Student Loan requirements.

5. ACCOUNTS AND RECORDS OF TUITION AND OTHER FEES

- 5.1 The Training Provider must keep accounts and Records in a way that clearly distinguishes income for fee-for-service training from government subsidised training.
- 5.2 The Training Provider must establish and maintain a separate general ledger account to record receipt of income from tuition fees and the payment of refunds of tuition fees.
- 5.3 The Training Provider must keep Records, including evidence and the date upon which evidence was sighted, to support any claim for a contribution towards revenue foregone as a result of granting Fee Concessions or Fee Waivers.