VET FEE-HELP Information for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) in Western Australia

What is VET FEE-HELP?

VET FEE-HELP is a Commonwealth Government loan scheme to help eligible VET students pay their tuition fees. Eligible students can take out a VET FEE-HELP loan to pay all or part of their tuition fees for VET courses at the diploma level or above, if they are studying with an RTO that is an approved VET provider.

What is an eligible student?

To access VET FEE-HELP assistance a student must be an Australian citizen or permanent humanitarian visa holder who meets the residency requirements for the purposes of VET FEE-HELP. The student must be enrolled in a unit of study that contributes to a VET course of study, that is, a VET diploma, advanced diploma, graduate certificate or graduate diploma.

Currently in Western Australia only full fee-paying students may access VET FEE-HELP.

What are the benefits for RTOs?

By offering students access to VET FEE-HELP the VET provider:

- assists students who would otherwise be unable to afford to study;
- may increase its market share; and
- may reduce the risk of students not paying their fees.

National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform and VET FEE-HELP

Under the National Partnership Agreement on Skills Reform, reached at the Council of Australian Governments (COAG) meeting in April 2012, all States and Territories agreed to the expansion of the income contingent loan scheme in the VET sector. VET FEE-HELP will be extended to State and Territory government subsidised students across all States and Territories over the next few years as student entitlements are implemented. Eligible subsidised students must be studying diploma or advanced diploma qualifications at approved VET providers to access VET FEE-HELP.

The commencement date for the extension of VET FEE-HELP to subsidised students in Western Australia is in 2014.

What are the eligibility criteria for approval as a VET provider?

To offer VET FEE-HELP to eligible domestic students, an RTO must be approved as a 'VET Provider'. Certain requirements must be met, including that the RTO is a body corporate that has a principal purpose to provide education. It must be established under the law of the Commonwealth, a State or a Territory, and carry on business, and have its central management and control, in Australia. Persons involved in the RTO's affairs must be fit and proper persons.

In addition, the RTO must be listed on the National Register (at http://training.gov.au), offer at least one VET course of study (ie, diploma level and above) and meet certain other requirements, including:

- the VET tuition assurance requirements;
- the VET quality and accountability requirements;
- the administrative requirements including reporting requirements.

As part of the VET quality and accountability requirements, applicants must be able to demonstrate that they are financially viable and likely to remain so. Certain information must be provided, as detailed in the Financial Viability Instructions for Applicants – refer to the Application Guide for more information. (see ‘How does an RTO apply for VET provider status’ below)

How does an RTO apply for VET provider status?

Applicants are required to submit an online application through the VET IT System (VITS) up to 5 May or in the new HELP Information Technology System (HITS) from June.

To assist applicants with compiling the information and documentation required for the application, the Department has developed a VET Provider Application Guide and optional templates that RTOs may wish to use when developing their policies and procedures. Applicants must also comply with the Financial Viability Instructions for Applicants (FVIA) in relation to financial information to be provided.

More detailed information and copies of these documents, as well as the VITS User Guide, are available at:


1 Higher Education Support Act 2003 (the Act), Schedule 1A, clause 13 and other requirements of the VET Guidelines.
How long does it take for applications to be approved?

Processing times vary depending on the quality of the application. Under the Act, applications must be decided within 90 days of receipt. However, if further information is requested, the processing time is extended. As a guide, applications may take 5 – 8 months.

What is involved with ongoing compliance?

VET providers must continue to comply with the VET quality and accountability requirements and maintain their registration on the National Register (at http://training.gov.au).

An approved VET provider must inform the Minister of any event that may significantly affect the provider’s capacity to meet the VET quality and accountability requirements.

In addition, VET providers are required to provide certain information to the department on a regular basis during each year.

Data reporting

Approved VET providers are required to submit data to the Department of Industry, Innovation, Climate Change, Science, Research and Tertiary Education up to four times a year. This data includes information on enrolments and completions, specific demographic data and amounts of VET FEE-HELP accessed with respect to a VET provider’s students.

Ongoing financial reporting

VET providers are required to provide the following financial information on an ongoing annual basis:

- Audited financial statements for the most recently completed annual reporting period
- Completed VET FEE-HELP Financial Ratio Analysis Workbook
- Where applicable, providers might also be required to provide:
  - Details of major projects
  - Evidence supporting capital injections and/or guarantees
  - Other risk mitigation strategies

The Department has published the Financial Viability Instructions (FVI) for assistance to approved VET providers. Information required for the purposes of ongoing financial reporting must be in accordance with the FVI.

Want more information about the application process?

- call the hotline 13 38 73
- email TSEnquiries@innovation.gov.au

Other resources


These notes are subject to change. Please refer to the website above, or email TSEnquiries@innovation.gov.au for clarification.