Withdrawal and Refunds Procedure

Contents

Withdrawal and Refunds Procedure 1
Introduction 1
Purpose ........................................................................................................... 1
Scope .............................................................................................................. 1
Rationale 1
Principles/Statement..................................................................................... 1
Procedure 2
Withdrawals .................................................................................................. 2
Fee Refunds .................................................................................................... 3
Processing ...................................................................................................... 5
Reference and Supporting Information 5
Definitions .................................................................................................... 5
Supporting Documents .................................................................................. 6
Internal Policy and Procedures ....................................................................... 6
Forms and Templates ..................................................................................... 6
Responsibility 6

Introduction

Purpose
To ensure accurate and timely processing of student withdrawals and refunds

Scope
This procedure applies to withdrawals and refunds of course fees in all categories of delivery.

Rationale

Principles/Statement
Under the conditions of its Funding Contract to provide Victorian Government-subsidised training, Federation Training must fulfil certain process and reporting requirements or risk not receiving or forfeiting funds already paid.

The withdrawal process is highly structured for a reason; reporting errors or omissions have a direct impact on our financial viability. It is therefore critical that staff assess and process withdrawals in accordance with this policy.

In addition to the financial dimension there are also important customer service obligations. Students have a right to expect timely and accurate withdrawal administration. In addition, the Institute has a duty of care to its students.

Extended non-attendance is judged as a withdrawal (both by internal processes and by SVTS reporting). However, withdrawals should not be treated as a rote administrative process but as the option of last resort. Education is a
shared endeavour; withdrawals have significant financial and aspirational repercussions for affected students and financial and reputational repercussions for Federation Training.

Procedure

Withdrawals

1. Teaching teams are required to review student participation on a weekly basis. At any point, but especially in the first 3 weeks after course commencement, when evidence of participation is not apparent for a particular student and there has been no formal withdrawal or other reason provided for “non-participation”, the student may be identified as potentially being ‘at risk’.

2. If the investigation reveals that the student does not intend to participate further in their course or unit, the trainer must refer the student to the Bubble via: bubble@federationtraining.edu.au. The Bubble Team will endeavour to contact all students to establish their needs and where possible provide support and guidance with the objective of increasing student retention (see Participation Procedure TL 026).

3. However, and as a consequence of the VET FEE-HELP Reform process (implemented 1 July 2015), trainers and the Bubble both need to be very conscious of census dates with respect to students seeking to withdraw from Diploma level or above courses. That is, any intervention must be prompt and not endanger the student’s option of withdrawing before the census date.

4. General principles of the Reform process are that RTOs must not have financial, administrative or other barriers that prevent a student from withdrawing from a VET unit of study on or before the census date, and that training providers will be held more accountable for repayment arising through poor management practices. A constructive desire to engage with a student to prevent withdrawal could be interpreted as an administrative barrier if the process extended too close to or beyond the census date.

5. Must ensure that where a student notifies the VET provider of withdrawal or cancellation the student will not remain enrolled from the date of notification.

6. If a student withdraws from individual unit(s) or from the entire course, a withdrawal form must be completed.

7. The withdrawal form may be completed by the student, a training portfolio representative or student administration staff.

8. It should then be submitted to student administration for processing.

9. If a student is deemed to have withdrawn, either by confirming this themselves, or by non-attendance / non-communication, the appropriate unit results are to be entered on the SMS by the teacher / training portfolio.

10. The withdrawal form must also show a course commencement and withdrawal date, attended hours or any commenced units and show a dollar amount for any material refund (for materials returned unused or material not yet unallocated) and be signed by the teacher. The withdrawal date for a module/unit or course withdrawal needs to be within the last month the student participated (in line with evidence of participation requirements) and not the actual date the paperwork was completed.

11. Please note: attended hours for withdrawn units cannot be 100% of the scheduled / nominal hours of a module/unit. For withdrawn units where participation has occurred, the attended hours claimable must be calculated by the following – divide scheduled hours by the months between the start and nominal end date of the unit (this can be the study period end date, calculated by the months actually engaged by the student).

12. For example:
   - Start date of the unit is in February and the nominal end date is June.
• The unit scheduled hours is 50
• Student withdraws after two months, and evidence of engagement has been recorded for both months.
• Total claimable attended hours on withdrawal is 20 SCH for the unit

13. If the student is enrolled in a Diploma, Advanced Diploma or Vocational Graduate course refer to VET FEE-HELP: Tuition Refund and Student Review Policy TL029 and apply the principles of this document.

Fee Refunds

If the Institute cancels a course, 100% of fees will be refunded.

FOR GOVERNMENT-SUBSIDISED STUDENTS IN CERTIFICATE I-IV COURSES:
If a student withdraws from all or part of a government funded course within four (4) weeks of course commencement they are eligible for a refund for all non-commenced units. Any refund is subject to the return of the student's ID card and property or material belonging to the Institute. A material refund is subject to the return of unused / unallocated materials.

If a student withdraws from all or part of a government funded course after four (4) weeks of course commencement, a refund will be given for any non-commenced units only. Tuition fees must be paid for all commenced units, regardless of whether they are complete. A refund on materials depends on the return of unused materials.

DIPLOMA-LEVEL AND ABOVE COURSES:
Students at Diploma, or above levels, regardless of whether they are fee-for-service or government subsidised, are subject to the VET FEE-HELP: Tuition Refund and Student Review Policy TL029.

As a consequence of the VET FEE-HELP Reform process (implemented 1 July 2015) RTOs must not charge a student any fine, penalty or fee for withdrawal.

If a student withdraws before the census date they receive a full refund of tuition fees of units not yet commenced. If they are using VET FEE-HELP, they will not incur a HELP debt and their FEE-HELP limit will not be reduced. However, if a student withdraws after the census date, they will receive no refund of tuition fees. If they are using VET FEE HELP, they will incur a HELP debt and their FEE HELP limit will be reduced. However the Reforms also make it clear that training providers will be “more accountable for repayment arising from poor recruitment and management practices”.

FOR COMMERCIAL PROGRAMS
If a student withdraws from a commercial course 5 days or more prior to course commencement they will receive a full refund.

If a student withdraws from a commercial course less than 5 days prior to course commencement they will receive a refund of 20% of the course fees (with a minimum charge $50).

Students are not entitled to a refund on commercial / fee for service courses if they withdraw or do not attend. For short courses only, and at the discretion of the enrolling Student Advisor, the tuition may be allocated to a subsequent short course session.
These details are summarised in the following table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clause</th>
<th>Federation Training Refund Policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Certificate I-IV courses – government funded (excluding Certificate IV VET FEE Help courses)</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Student initiated withdrawals within 4 weeks of training commencement – government funded | Full refund of units not yet commenced less:  
  • $50 administrative charge  
  • Charge for materials already utilised |
| Student initiated withdrawals four weeks or more after training has commenced – government funded | Full refund of units not yet commenced less:  
  • $100 administrative charge  
  • Charge for materials already utilised |
| **VET FEE HELP available courses Diploma, Advanced Diploma or Vocational Graduate programs, and nominated Certificate IV courses.** | |
| Student initiated withdrawals prior to the census date | Full refund of tuition fees of units not yet commenced. If you are using VET FEE-HELP, you will not incur a HELP debt and your FEE-HELP limit will not be reduced |
| Student initiated withdrawals after the census date | No refund of tuition fees. If you are using VET FEE HELP, you will incur a HELP debt and your FEE HELP limit will be reduced. |
| **Fee-for service/commercial programs** | |
| Student initiated withdrawals – fee-for-service programs | Up to 5 days prior to course commencement  
  • Full refund less $50 administrative charge  
  Less than 5 days prior to course commencement  
  • 20% of the course fees refunded (minimum charge $50) |
If the Institute cancels or is unable to provide services for which the learner has prepaid, the learner will:

- be placed into an equivalent course such that:
  - the new location is suitable to the learner, and
  - the learner receives the full services for which they have prepaid at no additional cost to the learner or
- If the Institute cancels a short course 100% of fees will be refunded to the student
- In cases where the Institute ceases to offer the services or a student transfers to another RTO (Recognised Training Organisation) and provides written proof of enrolment into the same qualification – 100 % of fees any units not commenced will be refunded.

**Processing**

13. Withdrawals must be processed within 5 working days of receiving all the required information. Withdrawals will be prioritised for those students approaching their census dates.

14. The withdrawal form is sent to a student administration officer for processing of fee adjustments in the SMS within 5 days of receipt from the teaching faculty.

15. A withdrawal letter is produced in the Document Production section of the SMS advising the student of the outcome of any refund or fees that may be payable.

16. If the student has a loan, their Direct Debit Repayment Schedule will be credited with the appropriate amount. However they may potentially still owe fees to the Institute for hours they have attended before withdrawing, or hours they will continue to attend. Student Administration will attach a copy of a statement if there is a balance owing and send out with the withdrawal letter.

17. Student refunds are processed every Friday via a direct deposit to the student’s nominated bank account. Refunds may be processed outside this cycle on approval from the Finance Team.

18. The withdrawal form is sent to Student Admin for filing.

19. All withdrawals must be reported within the year of the scheduled commencement of training and no later than two months from the point of withdrawal.

**Reference and Supporting Information**

**Definitions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Team Representative</td>
<td>Any person authorised by a Team Leader to approve the documentation relevant to withdrawals and refunds</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VET FEE HELP</td>
<td>VET FEE HELP is an income contingent loan scheme for the vocational educational and training sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuition fees</td>
<td>The tuition fee is the fee that the Institute charges students for each VET unit of study. VET FEE-HELP can only be used to pay for tuition fees. There are no minimum or maximum tuition fee requirements for VET FEE-HELP.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Supporting Documents
HESG VET Funding Contract 2014-16
DET VET FEE-HELP Reform Factsheet
DET VET Administrative Information for Providers (Incorporating the VET FEE-HELP reforms 2015/2016)

Internal Policy and Procedures
VET FEE Help Tuition Refund and Student Review Policy TL 029
Evidence of Participation Policy TL 026

Forms and Templates
Withdrawal /Refund Application SMS 018
Student Fee Refund Request FTFIN 07
Tax Adjustment Credit Note FTFIN 02

Responsibility
• Executive Director Education Programs, Quality & Compliance.

Please Note: For further information or assistance regarding policies and procedures contact:
The Policy Unit | Email: s.columbus@federationtraining.edu.au | Phone: 5152 0706 | URL:
www.federationtraining.edu.au