

Fees Policy

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1. Purpose

This policy ensures AFTRS' compliance with:

- 1.1. The *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (HESA Act) in relation to establishing and publishing fees for courses and subjects, and the provision and management of FEE-HELP loans.
- 1.2. The Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS Act) and the National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (National Code) in relation to the management and publishing of fees for international students.

This policy identifies AFTRS' rules pertaining to:

- 1.3. Approving and publishing tuition fees.
- 1.4. The requirements and expectations for students in the management of their fees, including their communications with AFTRS about these matters.
- 1.5. The additional circumstances that are applicable to international students in relation to their fees.

2. Scope

- 2.1. This policy applies to higher education courses.
- 2.2. This policy applies to enrolled students, international offer holders, and former students who are engaged in an active fee-related matter.

3. Policy Statement

Setting Fees

- 3.1. A tuition fee must be charged for each subject¹.
- 3.2. CRICOS-approved courses must have international student tuition fees set under the conditions stated in the Provider Guidelines².
- 3.3. Indicative course tuition fees are approved annually by the AFTRS Council.
- 3.4. The indicative course fee represents the total cost of all required subjects to complete a course in the calendar year that fee is published. This fee may change year-to-year.
- 3.5. Students are liable for additional costs where the indicative course fee may rise from year-to-year.
- 3.6. Indicative course fees are identified as domestic or international where necessary.
- 3.7. AFTRS may charge a student for a good or service related to the provision of their course– this is referred to as an Incidental Fee³.

Publishing Requirements

- 3.8. AFTRS will publish a *Fees Schedule for Domestic and International Students* (the “Fees Schedule”) annually.
- 3.9. The Fees Schedule must state the indicative course fee for each course offered in that year.
- 3.10. The Fees Schedule must contain sufficient information to enable a person to identify the relevant tuition fee for each subject⁴.
- 3.11. The total indicative course fee, and the periods to which that fee relates, must be available to international offer holders prior to accepting their offer to study^{5,6}. AFTRS will make this available in the formal letter of offer.

Paying Tuition Fees

- 3.12. Tuition fees (here after, referred to as “fees”) are charged on a per-semester basis.
- 3.13. Each subject enrolment has a fee that is determined by the credit point value of that subject.
- 3.14. A student becomes liable for a fee after the census date passes for the subject that the fee pertains to.
- 3.15. The two payment methods are upfront or FEE-HELP.

➤ See also: [Census Dates, Upfront Payment, and FEE-HELP Payment](#)

Payment Intention

- 3.16. Each student will select a *payment intention* when they enrol in a course. This is the method by which they will pay their fees.
- 3.17. The payment intention selected at course enrolment will determine the payment method that is applied to each subject enrolment for the duration of the course.
- 3.18. A change to payment intention must be made in writing.
- 3.19. If a payment intention is changed, any changes of payment method for individual subject enrolments will not be applied where the census date has passed for those subjects.

¹ Department of Education (2003). *HESA Act*, subsection 19-85 (a)

² Department of Education (2023). *Provider Guidelines*, Ch.6 (27) (1)

³ Department of Education (2023). *Higher Education Administrative Information for Providers – 17. Incidental Fees*.

<https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-publications/higher-education-administrative-information-providers-october-2021/17-incidental-fees>

⁴ Department of Education (2003). *HESA Act*, subsection 19-95 (2) (aa)

⁵ Department of Education (2018) *National Code*, Std. 2 (2.1.7)

⁶ Department of Education (2018) *National Code*, Std. 3 (3.3.4)

- 3.20. A student may wholly change their payment intention from one method to the other.
- 3.21. A student may instruct AFTRS to apply different payment methods to different subject fees.

Upfront Payment

- 3.22. All students may choose to pay their fees upfront.
- 3.23. Students are responsible for accessing their invoices through the Student Management System.
- 3.24. Upfront fees are paid by invoice on a per-semester basis.
- 3.25. Upfront payment terms are stated in a student's offer letter and on each invoice.
- 3.26. A student may instruct AFTRS to direct their invoice/s to a third-party payee (e.g. an employer or family member), however, the student will remain liable in the event of non-payment.
- 3.27. Where a third-party is the named payee on an invoice, that third-party will be the recipient of any refund that may be approved for the fees paid on that invoice.
- 3.28. Where a person or third-party other than the student makes a payment for a student, the invoice number must be used as a payment reference.
- 3.29. Where a payment cannot be identified against an invoice, the student will be required to produce evidence that may assist AFTRS in identifying that transaction.
- 3.30. Where a student has overdue fees, they will be informed in writing of any arrears and the options to resolve the matter prior to any escalation.
- 3.31. Unpaid fees may result in the cancellation of course enrolment by exclusion, the withholding of academic documents on course completion, or an award not being conferred.

FEE-HELP Payment

- 3.32. Eligible students may defer their fees through FEE-HELP, which is part of the Australian Government's Higher Education Loan Program (HELP).
- 3.33. FEE-HELP eligibility is determined by the HESA Act^{7,8}.
- 3.34. Students must complete an electronic Commonwealth Assistance Form (eCAF) prior to the census date/s for any subjects for which they intend to defer fees.
- 3.35. AFTRS will provide students with access to the eCAF as soon as practicable.
- 3.36. AFTRS must determine FEE-HELP eligibility for each relevant student prior to a census date passing.
- 3.37. FEE-HELP loans are determined on a per-subject basis, i.e. each subject enrolment will be allocated an individual loan.
- 3.38. Students are responsible for ensuring that they have a sufficient HELP loan balance to cover the full cost of their course fees.
- 3.39. AFTRS will make all practicable efforts to inform students where it becomes aware of a potential insufficient loan balance, however, students remain liable for any impacts of an insufficient loan balance.
- 3.40. Students without a sufficient HELP loan balance to pay their full course tuition fees will be required to pay any outstanding balances through the upfront payment method. A split FEE-HELP and upfront payment is allowable under these circumstances.
- 3.41. AFTRS must repay the Australian Government any HELP amount provided on the student's behalf where a student has been incorrectly assessed as eligible for HELP.
- 3.42. Each course's eligibility to offer FEE-HELP payment for its students is determined on a case-by-case basis⁹.
- 3.43. Undergraduate courses attract a loan fee that will be applied to each subject loan and does not reduce the balance of a person's HELP loan balance¹⁰.
- 3.44. The undergraduate loan fee is set by the Australian Government, and may be varied, by legislation.

⁷ Department of Education (2003). *HESA Act*, subsection 104-1 (1)

⁸ At the time of publication, the simplified FEE-HELP eligibility requirements are available on the Study Assist website, at: <https://www.studyassist.gov.au/help-loans/fee-help>.

⁹ At the time of publication, all AFTRS undergraduate and postgraduate coursework courses are FEE-HELP eligible.

¹⁰ Department of Education (2003). *HESA Act*, subsection 137-10 (2) (b)

International Students

- 3.45. International offer holders are required to pay one semesters' tuition fees upfront by the date specified in their letter of offer.
- 3.46. International students may be subject to an administrative fee in order to process an approved refund.
- 3.47. The administrative fee is published in the Fees Schedule and is subject change year-to-year.

Census Dates

- 3.48. AFTRS must set a census date for each subject, each year.
- 3.49. The census date for each subject must be published on or before the earliest enrolment date for that subject.
- 3.50. The census dates are published in the annual Fees Schedule.
- 3.51. A student may withdraw, in writing, from a subject prior to 11.59PM on a census date without incurring a financial or academic penalty for that subject.
- 3.52. A student that withdraws, in writing, after 11.59PM on a census date can apply, in certain circumstances, for a re-credit of their HELP balance or a refund of their up-front fee payment, whichever applies.

Re-Credit of HELP Balance and Refunds of Upfront Fees

- 3.53. Where a student has not successfully completed a subject¹¹, they may be eligible for a re-credit of their HELP balance or a refund of upfront fees.
- 3.54. An application for re-credit or refund of fees ("an application") must be submitted by the student.
- 3.55. An application must be received with supporting evidence before AFTRS will consider a re-credit HELP balance or refund of upfront fees.
- 3.56. AFTRS will consider an application using the eligibility criteria stated in the HESA Act¹².
- 3.57. AFTRS will determine an outcome for an application using the special circumstances test stated in the HESA Act¹³.
- 3.58. In applicable circumstances where an application has not been made by a student, AFTRS may undertake a re-credit of HELP balance under the conditions set in the HESA Act¹⁴.
- 3.59. AFTRS will provide a written response to an application within 28 days of its receipt.
- 3.60. The written response will include the reasons for the decision against the eligibility criteria and the special circumstances test.

Appeals of Re-Credit and Refund Outcomes

- 3.61. Where an applicant is not satisfied with the initial decision, they may make an appeal to AFTRS.
- 3.62. This appeal must:
 - 3.62.1 Establish the grounds for an appeal (citing the reasons that original application, the submitted evidence and/or AFTRS' written response)
 - 3.62.2 Be made within 28 days of the outcome.
 - 3.62.3 Be made in writing.
 - 3.62.4 Be received by the AFTRS Student Centre via email.
- 3.63. The CEO or delegate will review the appeal and either; (a) confirm the decision, (b) vary the decision, or (c) set the decision aside and substitute a new decision.
- 3.64. AFTRS will provide a written response to an appeal within 45 days of its receipt.
- 3.65. The written response will include the reasons for the decision against the grounds that have been cited by the appellant.

¹¹ To successfully complete a subject a student must have received a passing grade for that subject.

¹² Department of Education (2003). *HESA Act*, subsection 104-25 (1)

¹³ Department of Education (2003). *HESA Act*, subsection 104-30 (1)

¹⁴ Department of Education (2003). *HESA Act*, subsections 104-27 (1), 104-43 (1), 104-44 (2) and 104-44 (3)

- 3.66. The decision to refuse a re-credit of a person's HELP balance is a reviewable decision, therefore subject to review by the Administrative Review Tribunal (ART) after it has been reconsidered by AFTRS.
- 3.67. An application to the ART must be lodged within 28 days of receipt of the appeal decision.
- 3.68. An applicant may lodge this appeal directly with the ART and AFTRS will provide the contact details of the relevant ART registry, along with approximate costs of lodging an appeal, to the applicant.

Provider Default

- 3.69. In the event of provider default, AFTRS must refund of any upfront payment made against an affected subject.
- 3.70. In the event of provider default, AFTRS must re-credit any HELP balance and cancel your HELP debt for any FEE-HELP loan(s) used to pay for the affected subject(s) under the conditions set in the Act¹⁵.

Special Financial Assistance

- 3.71. Domestic students may be eligible for special financial assistance including an upfront payment plan.
- 3.72. Applications for special financial assistance are assessed on a case-by-case basis.
- 3.73. International students are not eligible for Financial Support.

4. Responsibilities

Compliance, monitoring and review

- 4.1. The Academic Delegations Schedule sets the decision-making authorities for all aspects of this policy.
- 4.2. The Head of Governance, or delegate, is responsible for ensuring this policy aligns with relevant legislation.
- 4.3. The Head of Student Centre, or delegate, is responsible for ensuring that AFTRS student-facing communications, documents and instructions are aligned with this policy.
- 4.4. This policy is reviewed annually.

Reporting

- 4.5. No additional reporting is required.

Records management

- 4.6. The Policy and Governance Officer will maintain all records relevant to administering this policy and procedure.
- 4.7. This policy and procedure is considered a corporate document and required to be registered in the AFTRS Policy Register.

5. Definitions

Census Date: The last date before which a person can withdraw from a unit of study and not incur an academic or financial penalty.

Domestic Student: A student who is an Australian citizen or holder of an Australian permanent visa.

International Student: A student who is not a citizen or permanent resident of Australia, citizen of New Zealand, or holder of an Australian humanitarian visa.

Offer Holder: An applicant that has been made formal an offer to study.

Subject: A unit of study as defined under the HESA Act.

Subject Enrolment: The process by which a student enters a subject within a course each study period. Each subject enrolment must be given an outcome in due course. A tuition fee must be charged for each subject enrolment.

Tuition Fee: By legislation, a provider must require every student who is enrolled in a subject, who is not Commonwealth supported, and who is not an exempt student, to pay a tuition fee for the subject.

¹⁵ Department of Education (2003). *HESA Act*, subsection 104-42

6. Related Legislation and Documents

- Academic Delegations Schedule
- AFTRS Fee Schedule for Domestic and Overseas Students
- Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (*ESOS Act*)
- Higher Education Provider Guidelines 2023 (*Provider Guidelines*)
- Higher Education Support Act 2003 (*HESA Act*)
- National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2018 (*National Code*)

7. Approval and Review Details

Approval and Review	Details
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Responsible Officer	Head of Governance
Contact Officer	Compliance Manager
Distribution	Base Camp and AFTRS website Staff and Public facing
Next Review Date	01/08/2027

Approval and Amendment History	Details
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Amendments History and Dates	CEO, 19 August 2024 —v5.0 amendments include the standardisation of terminology, and changes as a result of the review of systematic, statement-based overview of AFTRS' fee-related structures, requirements and outcomes. The review included feedback form the ASQC, Academic Board endorsement.; CEO, 18/05/2020 —v.4.0 amendments include updates to Permanent Residency Recognition; CEO, v. 1.0 – 3.0 - prior to introduction of amendment details record. [Includes the previous approval authority approval dates and corresponding amendment detail. This section ill will expand over time.]
Notes	N/A
Minor Amendment Approval and History	N/A <<DD/MM/20YY — Xxxxx>> [A minor amendment consists of an administrative edit made to the document or a change that is not material to the document. The Responsible Officer can approve a minor amendment. Insert the date that the Responsible Officer approved the minor amendment along with the details of the amendment (For example: “01/12/2020 — administrative amendment: update of role titles aligned to restructure”, or insert, if not relevant, N/A [If making a minor amendment, do not amend details in the Original Approval Authority section nor amend the version number, only replace the new minor amendment approval date to the file]