



## VET FEE-HELP Grandfathering

On 1 January 2017, the VET Student Loans program commenced and VET FEE-HELP scheme closed for all new students. VET Student Loans give students, providers and the VET sector the opportunity to better meet industry needs and employment outcomes while ensuring quality providers are delivering the program.

For VET Student Loans information, a list of approved courses, relevant caps, and a list of approved course providers is available at [www.education.gov.au/vet-student-loans](http://www.education.gov.au/vet-student-loans).

Students engaged in study who accessed VET FEE-HELP for their course prior to 1 January 2017 had the choice to *opt-in* to continue their study with access to VET FEE-HELP until 31 December 2017, with students able to apply to continue beyond 2017 in some circumstances\*.

The department sent out opt-in emails and letters progressively from December 2016 to all students with records reported by their providers.

### What is the impact for providers?

- Existing VET FEE-HELP providers, including those not approved under VET Student Loans, with existing VET FEE-HELP students will be permitted to teach out these students until 31 December 2017, provided eligibility requirements are met.
- The department has a range of compliance monitoring arrangements in place to ensure the integrity of the opt-in process.
  - VET FEE-HELP providers cannot submit the opt-in form on behalf of students.
- The provider will need to conduct further eligibility checks to ensure the student meets all its (the RTO's) course requirements. These eligibility checks conducted by the provider may include, but are not limited to:
  - the student's course details recorded in the opt-in confirmation letter match/align with their course records (particularly where a course has been superseded)
  - that the student satisfies the provider's requirements for continued study
  - that the student has future census dates relating to their course.
- Providers will not receive payment for census dates in 2017 that have already passed for their continuing students until the students have opted-in following the opt-in process.
  - Providers should not report data for a student if that student has not opted-in.
  - The requirement for students to opt-in and confirm their continued engagement in study is part of the eligibility requirements for students to obtain continued access to VET FEE-HELP.
  - Providers can, however, report student data once the student has opted-in.
- The grandfathering of VET FEE-HELP students does not preclude providers from having to continue to meet all the requirements of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (HESA).
- VET FEE-HELP providers are also reminded that grandfathered students moving into new courses from superseded ones, or to a new provider under tuition assurance arrangements, will be required to complete a replacement VET FEE-HELP Request for Commonwealth Assistance form under the request for Commonwealth assistance requirements (clause 45C of Schedule 1A to HESA), nominating the replacement/superseding course or replacement provider. The completion of a new CAF does not impact eligibility for grandfathering under these circumstances.

- VET FEE-HELP Request for Commonwealth Assistance forms continue to be available and may be used for this purpose only. Requests for an issue of these forms are being closely monitored. Requests for CAFs can be submitted using the enquiry form at [www.education.gov.au/vet-fee-help-providers](http://www.education.gov.au/vet-fee-help-providers).

## What is the impact for students?

To be eligible for VET FEE-HELP grandfathering a student must:

- have enrolled in and commenced VET courses before 31 December 2016, and
- have already received VET FEE-HELP assistance for units of those courses (must have had at least one census date before 31 December 2016), and
- remain enrolled in those courses with their original provider (or a replacement provider following activation of tuition assurance arrangements).
- All students had until **31 March 2017** to opt-in if they intended to access VET FEE-HELP for continued study in incomplete courses for which they have already accessed VET FEE-HELP.
  - This date is not about their ability to continue to engage in study, it is about their continued access to a VET FEE-HELP loan (i.e. access to the VET FEE-HELP grandfathering arrangements).
  - It is up to each student to provide their opt-in confirmation letter to their provider informing the provider if they intend to continue studies and access a VET FEE-HELP loan in 2017 to pay their tuition fees.
    - Where a student has submitted an enquiry prior to midnight 31 March 2017, the enquiry is being resolved. Where a student meets the eligibility requirements, the opt-in invitation will be sent or resent to the email address submitted by the student and the student can opt-in after 31 March 2017\*\*.
- Superseded courses are recognised as the same course for the purposes of allowing continuing students to access VET FEE-HELP for the replacement course, provided other eligibility criteria are met. Providers will need to report the replacement/superseding course in their course submission for 2017 and ensure the student's data references the new course.
- Students studying at a provider that has closed should ensure that they have opted-in using the instructions in the email/letter sent by the department. This will allow their replacement VET FEE-HELP provider (following activation of tuition assurance requirements) to take them on as a student for any remaining parts of their course. Information about providers that are closing will be updated on the VET Student Loans website. Students should refer to the Tuition assurance factsheet available at [www.education.gov.au/vet-student-loans](http://www.education.gov.au/vet-student-loans).

*\*In some circumstances some students may be eligible to extend their VET FEE-HELP assistance beyond 31 December 2017. Such circumstances may include, for example, illness or caring responsibilities. Part-time students may also be eligible for further extension. Applications will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Details on these arrangements about how students can request VET FEE-HELP for 2018 will be published on the website later in 2017.*

*\*\* The Department of Education and Training publically announced the closure of VET FEE HELP in October 2016. There has been social media campaigns, letters and emails have been sent to all students, and VET FEE-HELP providers have been able to give their students the necessary information to ensure genuine students can opt in. If a student believes they meet the eligibility requirements and wish their case to be considered they will have to make sure they provide clear details why they did not submit an enquiry before 31 March 2017. The department will consider their case. If you they are a genuine student and satisfy the eligibility requirements, they may have the opportunity to opt-in (with all other requirements being met). Claims and evidence can be submitted at [www.education.gov.au/vet-fee-help-grandfathering](http://www.education.gov.au/vet-fee-help-grandfathering)*

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