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## Purpose

This procedure describes how students who are prevented from completing a unit of study due to special circumstances can apply for a remission of debt, be credited for fees paid upfront, or receive a refund, including:

- eligibility
- how to apply
- how applications are assessed
- how debt is remitted, fees re-credited or refunds are paid
- how a student can ask for review of a decision in relation to a remission application.

## Applicable governance instruments

| Instrument                                                                                                | Section                                                               | Principles         |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|
| <i>Student Fees Policy</i>                                                                                | 1 Student Fees<br>3 Refund of fees and remission of debt              | 1.1-1.3<br>3.1-3.2 |
| <i>Higher Education Support Act (HESA) 2003</i>                                                           | 42. Recrediting and Remission of Payment                              | N/A                |
| <i>National Code of Practice for Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students, 2018 (Cth)</i> | Standard 2: Recruitment of a student<br>Standard 3: Written Agreement | N/A                |

## Procedure

### 1. Background

The University's *Remission of Student Debt Procedure* provides a regulated and transparent process for how Commonwealth supported and full fee paying domestic and international students can apply for a remission of debt in special circumstances and how this will be assessed consistent with relevant legislation.

The University requires all students to pay or defer tuition fees owed for their course by the relevant due date for each study period (see [Key Dates](#)). Students can do this in one of two ways:

- Deferring payment through a HELP loan (i.e. HECS-HELP, FEE-HELP) if eligible, **or**
- Making an up-front payment

The objectives of this procedure are to ensure that:

- Students are provided with clear and accessible information detailing the circumstances under which remission of debt will occur and fees will be re-credited or refunded.
- Students' requests for remission are acknowledged and assessed in a timely, fair and equitable manner, and consistent with relevant Federal legislation.
- The University aims to achieve the best possible outcome for students.

This procedure applies to:

- Domestic Commonwealth Supported and Full Fee-Paying Students
- International students
- Open Universities Australia (OUA) Commonwealth Supported students

This procedure does not apply to:

- Open Universities Australia (OUA) students studying through Open Access (Full Fee-Paying)

### 2. Eligibility for Remission of Debt

- 2.1. A student is eligible to apply for a remission of debt if they:
  - a) withdrew from a unit after the census date of the relevant study period, **and/or**
  - b) were prevented from completing the unit, **and**
  - c) demonstrate the special circumstances prescribed in Section 4.
- 2.2. Students who meet the eligibility criteria detailed above, can either apply for one or both of the following:
  - a) remission of their HECS-HELP or FEE-HELP loan debt for that unit,
  - b) re-credit or refund of any upfront tuition fees they have paid for that unit.
- 2.3. [Student Services and Amenities Fees \(SSAF\)](#) cannot be remitted. Students will remain liable for any SSAF.

### 3. Applying for Remission of Debt

- 3.1. A student wanting to apply for a remission of debt must submit a complete application within 12 months of the last day of the relevant study period. The last day is the end of the Deferred Exam Period (See [Key Dates](#)).
- 3.2. To apply for a remission, the student must complete an 'Application for Remission Form' (available in the Student Portal). In the form the student will need to:

- a) Specify the reason/s for withdrawing from study (i.e. medical, family, employment, course related) and outline how these reasons:
    - i. were beyond the student's control
    - ii. did not fully impact on the student's ability to complete the unit until on, or after, the relevant census date, and
    - iii. prevented the student from being able to complete the relevant unit of study.
  - b) Include professional independent supporting documentation which clearly addresses each of the requirements of section 3.2 a) above. Supporting documentation must be in English. If in a language other than English, an authorised translation by a NAATI-accredited translator must be included. Supporting documentation may be from:
    - i. medical/health practitioner (included as part of the Application for Remission Form)
    - ii. independent member of the community (i.e. counsellor, psychologist or religious leader)
    - iii. employer.
  - c) Declare that the application and supporting documents are truthful and genuine.
- 3.3. An application may be submitted outside of the required 12-month period if the University is satisfied that the student was unable to apply within the required timeframe (see section 3.1). In these cases, the supporting documentation must also address why the application could not be submitted sooner.
- 3.4. The remission assessment process will start when the University receives a complete Application for Remission form and required supporting documentation.

#### 4. Assessment of Remission

- 4.1. Applications for remission are assessed by the Fees Team. Applications will be acknowledged upon receipt and will normally be assessed within 28 days. If the assessment of an application takes longer than 28 days, the Fees Team will advise the student and keep them informed of the status of their application.
- 4.2. When assessing the application, the Fees Team may ask the student to provide additional supporting information. A student can also provide further documentation while their application is being assessed.
- 4.3. The following principles are applied to the assessment of all remission applications:
  - a) For a remission application to be successful, the Fees Team must be satisfied that the requirements of section 3.2 a) have been met as follows:
    - i. **Special circumstances are considered beyond a student's control if:**
      - the situation is not due to the student's action or inaction **and**
      - the student is not responsible for the situation, **and**
      - the situation is unusual, uncommon, or abnormal.
    - ii. **Special circumstances do not make full impact on the student until on or after the census date if the circumstances occur:**
      - before the census date but worsened after that day, **or**
      - before the census date, but the full effect or magnitude did not become apparent until after that day, **or**
      - on or after the census date, **and**
      - before the end of the applicable exam period.

**iii. Special circumstances that have made it impractical for a student to complete course requirements include:**

- Medical circumstances (i.e. where the student's medical circumstances have changed to such an extent that they are unfit and unable to continue studying), **and/or**
- Family/personal circumstances (i.e. death or severe medical problems within a family, or unforeseen family financial difficulties such that it is unreasonable to expect a student to continue studies), **and/or**
- Employment related circumstances (i.e. where a student's employment status or arrangements have changed to the extent that they are unable to continue studies and this change is beyond their control), **and/or**
- Course related circumstances (i.e. where the University has changed a unit it has offered and the student is disadvantaged by either not being able to complete the unit or not being given credit towards other units or courses).

**b) No remission will be given in the following circumstances:**

- i. Failure of a student to understand or seek clarification of University requirements as specified in its policies, processes and rules (for example, if a student misreads the University's [Key Dates](#) page or information outlined in their Offer Letter).
- ii. Delay by the student in checking correspondence sent by the University.

4.4 Once the application has been assessed, the Fees Team will notify the student in writing of the remission decision and reasons for the decision.

4.5 If the application is successful:

- a) The relevant unit/s will be withdrawn without academic penalty and the student will receive a grade of WW (Withdrawn Without Academic Penalty).
- b) If the fees for the relevant unit were deferred through a student loan (see section 2.2 a), the debt will be reversed and the government will be notified.
- c) If the fees for the relevant unit were paid upfront, the student can choose to either:
  - i. have their credit amount transferred to their next study period's tuition fees
  - ii. apply for a refund if they are withdrawing from their course (see section 5).

4.6 If the application is unsuccessful, the student will be informed of the process for a review (see section 6).

## **5. Payment of Refund**

- 5.1. After receiving a remission, students wanting to apply for a refund of the funds in credit should submit a refund application as soon as possible.
- 5.2. To apply for a refund, the student must complete a 'Fee Refund Request Form' (available in [Student Forms](#)).
- 5.3. The University's Finance Team will refund to the source account that was used to pay the tuition fees or health cover. In the event that the source account does not belong to the student, or the fees cannot be returned to the source account, the refund may be paid to the student's bank account upon verification (see 5.4)
- 5.4. The account is verified by the Fees Team prior to payment of the refund. The Fees Team will request the student or agent to provide documentation showing payment of the deposit.

- 5.5. The Fees Team may suspend or cancel the payment of a refund if the account details cannot be verified.
- 5.6. In the event that the student is deceased, the personal legal representative of the Deceased Estate must apply for any payments which are to be refunded. The administrators must supply details about who the refund is payable to. The University reserves the right to request official documentation to support any such claims.
- 5.7. Refunds paid into overseas bank accounts will be converted from Australian dollars into the currency of the country where the bank account is held. If the local currency is not available, the amount will be converted into US dollars.
- 5.8. Refunds paid into an overseas bank account will attract a bank fee. This will be deducted from the refund amount. A student's overseas financial institution may also charge other amounts, including but not limited to, currency conversion fees.

## 6. Review of Remission Decision

- 6.1. If a student is dissatisfied with the decision in relation to their remission application, the student can request review by the Student Fees Team on the following grounds.
  - a) That there has been a procedural or administrative error in reaching the decision on the remission (for example there has been an error with the assessment)
- 6.2. To request review, the student will need to email to [U.Connect@utas.edu.au](mailto:U.Connect@utas.edu.au) within 28 calendar days from the date of notifying the student of the decision:
  - a) explaining the grounds for review, and
  - b) providing evidence in support.
- 6.3. Requests for review will only be considered if a student can provide new or additional supporting documentation (outside of what was originally provided). The Fees Team may also ask the student to provide additional documentation or evidence.
- 6.4. The Fees Team will promptly review the remission decision and notify the student in writing of the outcome and reason (normally within 28 days of the request). If the review of a remission decision takes longer than 28 days, the Fees Team will advise the student and keep them informed of the status of their review.
- 6.5. If the student's request for review is successful, the notification will include the information regarding withdrawal of academic penalty, remission of loan debt, recredit of fees or refund advice.
- 6.6. If the student's request for review is unsuccessful, the student will be advised that they can request review by an external body, such as [Ombudsman Tasmania](#).

## Related procedures

*Domestic Student Fee Procedure*

*International Student Fee Procedure*

*International Student Fee Refund Procedure*

**Versions**

| <b><u>Version</u></b> | <b>Approved by</b>                                      | <b>Business Owner</b>                                               | <b>Approval Date</b> |
|-----------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------|
| 1                     | Vice-President, Strategy, Marketing and Finance         | Director Student Systems and Administration                         | 21 April 2022        |
| 2                     | Vice-President, Strategy, Marketing and Finance         | Executive Director Student Services Manager, Student Administration | 25 April 2023        |
| 3                     | Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Student Services and Operations | Executive Director Student Services Manager, Student Administration | 28 April 2024        |

REPLACED