1. **POLICY STATEMENT**

1.1 **Purpose /Intent:**

The purpose of this policy is to provide West Coast Institute staff and domestic students enrolled in a VET FEE-HELP enabled course refund guidelines which apply to a withdrawal from a VET Unit of Study or a VET Course of Study on or before the census date.

1.2 **Policy Objectives:**

- To provide guidelines on how students requesting refund of paid tuition fees for enrolments in VET FEE-HELP enabled courses and/or VET units of study
- To ensure all West Coast Institute staff involved in administration of VET FEE-HELP enabled courses has the appropriate information and training as to the correct procedures for processing refunds for students in the VET FEE-HELP enabled courses/VET units of study.

1.3 **Scope:**

This policy applies to all West Coast Institute staff dealing with requests for refunds in relation to a VET FEE-HELP enabled course from students who are not overseas students as defined by the *Education Services for Overseas Students (ESOS) Act 2000*.

1.4 **Definitions:**

**Census Date** - The last day a student may withdraw from a VET Unit of Study in which they are enrolled without incurring a liability for tuition fees or a VET FEE-HELP debt.

**FEE-HELP** – a Commonwealth Government loan scheme helping eligible students to defer paying fees for undergraduate and postgraduate units.

**West Coast Institute (WCI), “the Organisation”** – refers to West Coast Institute, including all its campuses, departments, centres, business units, corporate units and delivery centres.

**VET Course of Study** – a qualification that has been approved by DEEWR as eligible for VET FEE-HELP Assistance.

**VET FEE-HELP** – an income contingent loan scheme for the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector that is part of the Higher Education Loan Program (HELP). VET FEE-HELP is an extension of FEE-HELP.

**VET Unit of Study** – a published unit of study that forms part of a VET Course of Study.
1.5 Policy Principles:

West Coast Institute will conduct this procedure in compliance with Schedule 1A of the Higher Education Support Act 2003 and the VET Provider Guidelines.

For the purposes of this procedure:

- A student is an Australian citizen or an Australian resident permanent humanitarian visa holder enrolled in a VET FEE-HELP enabled course with West Coast Institute.
- A student who has fully paid their tuition fees may apply for an appropriate refund
- A student cannot apply for a refund if he or she has completed the subject.

Withdrawal from a VET Unit of Study / VET Course of Study

Students who wish to withdraw from a VET unit of study or VET FEE-HELP enabled course of study must do so in writing using the VET FEE-HELP Enabled Course/Subject Withdrawal Form which is available from the Customer Service Centre at each West Coast Institute campus.

Refund within Census Date

A refund of tuition fees is appropriate under the following circumstances:

- Students who withdraw after enrolling in a VET FEE-HELP enabled qualification on or before the census date, shall receive a refund of 100 per cent of tuition fees paid for the semester.
- the student will not incur a VET FEE-HELP debt.

Refund after Census Date

In the event of a student withdrawing from a VET unit of study or VET FEE-HELP enabled qualification after census date for that unit of study or qualification:

- no refund is applicable; and/or
- the student may still be liable for a VET FEE-HELP debt.

Special Circumstances

Where withdrawals are submitted after census date, the student may apply for a refund under special circumstances, based on one of the following:

- medical reasons,
- employment related reasons,
- course related reasons,

West Coast Institute must re-credit the FEE-HELP balance if it is satisfied that special circumstances apply to the student that are:

- beyond the student’s control;
- do not make their full impact on the student until on, or after, the census date; and
- Make it impracticable for the student to complete the requirements for the unit during the period which the student undertook, or was to undertake, the unit.
This situation must be unusual, uncommon or abnormal.

All applications must include independent supporting documentation. All documentation must include sufficient information to support the claims made.

Each application will be examined and determined on its merits. West Coast Institute will consider the student’s claims, together with any independent supporting documentary evidence that substantiates these claims.

The procedure for the application of a refund in a VET unit of study or VET FEE-HELP enabled qualification is as follows:

(a) The Student must formally withdraw from a VET unit of study or VET FEE-HELP enabled qualification and submitted on a VET FEE-HELP Enabled Subject / Course Withdrawal Form available from the Customer Service Centre at each West Coast Institute campus. West Coast Institute shall confirm the withdrawal by giving notice to the student in writing (or signed copy of the submitted withdrawal form) stating the date at which the withdrawal has taken effect; and advise the student that the withdrawal process will take up to 28 days.

(b) The written application must also include supporting documentation that demonstrates that the requirements for special circumstances have been met if applicable.

(c) The Customer Service Centre must ensure the withdrawal form is received by the VET FEE-HELP Administrator within 2 days of submission.

(d) The VET FEE-HELP Administrator will consider and process the application for Tuition Fee Refund within 28 days of the date of the withdrawal being submitted by the student and request any further clarification from the delivery area and student if necessary. If the application for refund occurs outside the VET unit of study census date, the VET FEE-HELP Administrator may either reject the withdrawal or seek further documentation from the student to support their application.

(e) If the application is successful, West Coast Institute will arrange for appropriate refund of paid tuition fees. If the application is unsuccessful, the student must be advised of their opportunity to apply for a ‘Review of a Decision’.

(f) VET FEE-HELP Administration shall advise the student of the outcome of the application within 28 days from date of withdrawal submission stating the reasons for the decision;

Review of a Decision

If a student is not satisfied with the decision made by the VET FEE-HELP Administrator in relation to refunds, they may request a review of the decision.

The review shall be carried out by the Review Officer who is the Director and is senior to the original decision maker.

Any such request must be submitted to the Review Officer in writing and:

(a) must be lodged within 28 days of receiving notice of the original decision, unless the Review Officer allows a longer period;

(b) must specify the reasons for making the request and include any supporting documentation; and
(c) sent to:

West Coast Institute
Locked Bag 7
Joondalup WA 6919

The Review Officer shall acknowledge receipt of an application for a review of the refusal to refund tuition fees paid for a VET FEE-HELP enabled course or unit of study in writing. The Review Officer shall:

(a) seek all relevant information from the person who made the original decision;

(b) review the case within 2 weeks and advise the student of the decision in writing giving the reasons for the reviewer's decision.

The Review Officer may:

(a) confirm the decision;

(b) vary the decision; or

(c) set the decision aside and substitute a new decision.

The applicant must be notified of the outcomes of the Review in writing within 2 weeks of receiving the review application. This notice shall also advise the applicant that they have the right to apply to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal within 28 days of a decision for a review of that decision and will provide the contact details of the closest Administrative Appeals Tribunal Registry and the approximate costs of lodging an appeal as follows:

*If you wish to further appeal this decision you may lodge an appeal with the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) within 28 days from this written notice. The current fee to lodge an application with the AAT for the review of a decision can be found on the AAT website: [www.aat.gov.au/FormsAndFees/Fees.htm](http://www.aat.gov.au/FormsAndFees/Fees.htm), or contact the AAT at:*

*Administrative Appeals Tribunal*

*Level 5 - 111 St Georges Terrace*

*Perth WA 6000*

*Telephone (08) 9327 7200*
2. RELATED DOCUMENTS

2.1 Governing Documents:

Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA) - Schedule 1A
VET Provider Handbook
VET FEE-HELP Guidelines
VET Administration Guidelines
VET Provider Guidelines, issued by the Department of Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education. (DIISRTE)
VET FEE-HELP Guidelines

2.2 Related Policies:

Student Review Policy for Re-crediting a FEE-HELP Balance for a VET FEE HELP Enabled Course
VET FEE-HELP Grievances, Complaints and Appeals Policy (Academic and Non Academic)

2.3 Related Procedures and Forms:

None

2.4 Supporting/Related Documents:

None
3. ACCOUNTABILITIES

3.1 Monitoring and Evaluation:

General Manager, Training and Business Services
Corporate Executive Committee
Manager, Student Services

4. REVISION HISTORY

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5. KEYWORDS

6.1 Keywords:

VET FEE-HELP, Census date, Refund, Special Circumstances, Withdrawals, VET Unit of Study, VET Course of Study, VET FEE-HELP enabled study

6. POLICY APPROVAL

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Endorsed: Managing Director Date: