

VET Student Loan (VSL) Tuition Assurance - Policy and Procedure

PURPOSE

- To protect students enrolled in approved VET Student Loan courses, should Salford College cease to provide a VET course of study while students are still enrolled and consequently unable to complete it.

SCOPE

- Outlines the requirements under the VET Student Loans Act 2016 and VET Student Loans Rules 2016 for administration staff and Executive Management to:
 - Inform students and the Tuition Assurance Administrator when the College ceases or intends to cease a VET course of study while any students are enrolled and unable to complete their course or part of a course.
 - Circumstances for re-crediting student VET Student Loan balances excluding students applying for Special Circumstances. Refer to Special Circumstances and Review Policy for VET Student Loans Students.
 - Processes and information for re-crediting under section 71 of the VET Student Loans Act 2016.

POLICY

TUITION ASSURANCE ARRANGEMENT

- Under the provisions of the VET Student Loans Act 2016, Salford College must comply with the Department's VET Tuition Assurance requirements.
- This arrangement protects VET Student Loan applicants if the College ceases to provide the course they are enrolled in once a course has commenced but before its completion. The following scenarios impact the College's ability to deliver a VET course of study:
 - The College ceases to operate as a Registered Training Organisation (RTO).
 - The VET Student Loan course is remarkably different to the course in which the student enrolled.
 - The processes for cancellation and withdrawal have not complied with the documented cancellation and withdrawal policies and procedures.
 - The College is unable to deliver the content of the course to the expected standard under the Australian Qualifications Framework.
 - VET tuition assurance arrangements are published on the College website, and students are advised of the arrangements at enrolment.

NOTICE OF EVENTS IMPACTING ON VET STUDENT LOAN COURSE DELIVERY

- Salford College will provide notice of events to the Tuition Protection Service Provider (TPS) within two business days should the following events occur:
 - Notice or proceedings are taken to cancel business registration under the Corporations Act 2001 (or similar legislation) or dissolve a legal entity.
 - The College is placed into external administration.
 - Fails to comply with a statutory demand under the Corporations Act 2001.
 - Is unable to pay debts when due.
 - A resolution is made, or proceedings are initiated to close the company.

- The College must also notify the TPS in writing as soon as practicable if it intends to cease delivering a VET Student Loan approved course after it has commenced but before students have completed.

SALFORD COLLEGE AS A REPLACEMENT PROVIDER

- Should Salford College enroll students as a replacement provider, a credit will be awarded for superseded and equivalent units in the replacement qualification evidenced by a verified Statement of Attainment or their Unique Student Identifier (USI) record.
- The student will not be charged course tuition fees for the replacement components of the replacement course.
- Replacement courses must lead to an equivalent or comparable qualification outcome as the original course, have the same mode of delivery (e.g., classroom-based, online, or blended) as the original course.

STUDENT APPLICATION TO THE SECRETARY FOR RE-CREDIT

- A student may apply to the Secretary in writing for their VET Student Loan balance to be re-credited under section 71 of the VET Student Loans Act 2016 due to unacceptable conduct concerning the student's VET Student Loan application, or on the grounds the College breached the requirements of the Act and supporting regulations. Unacceptable conduct may encompass the following:
 - Unconscionable conduct.
 - Misleading or deceptive conduct.
 - Making representations that are not considered reasonable.
 - Advertising tuition fees if the provider is aware the course may not be delivered.
 - Harassment or coercion during the student's application process or enrolment of the course.
- These applications must be made within five years after the census day of the course, or part of the course unless otherwise extended by the Secretary. The Department requests the following information be provided to support the application:
 - Details of the course.
 - Details of the provider.
 - The loan amount to be re-credited.
 - Student identifier.
 - Supporting documentation.
- A student not satisfied with the re-credit decision made, may apply to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) <https://www.aat.gov.au/> for review and may supply additional information to the AAT they did not previously supply to the Salford College, including the review officer.

PROCEDURE

TUITION ASSURANCE PROCEDURE.

- In the instance that Salford College ceases to provide a VET Student Loan approved course, or part of a course once commenced, but before completion, the following steps will be taken in accordance with the VET Student Loan Rules 2016 (section 53 Notice and information when course ceases and section 91 Action when provider ceases to provide course).

- Student enrolled in the ceased course will be notified in writing within two (2) days advising that the course is no longer being provided
- A meeting will be held with the students and tuition assurance operator at the course location, within seven (7) days after the students have been notified
- The college website will be updated to reflect that said course is no longer being provided
- Provide notice to the tuition assurance operator advising of the events occurring as required by section 52 and 53 of the VET Student Loans Rules 2016.
- Once notice is received from the tuition assurance operator, the student is advised of their VET Student Loan Balance which is to be re-credited.

REPLACEMENT PROVIDER PROCEDURE.

- When a replacement course is offered to students, the following will occur (Section 92 – VET Student Loans Rules 2016):
- Salford College will ensure course credits are granted for the parts of the original course which has been successfully completed by the student. The student will be provided with a Statement of Attainment (SoA) which is in-line with the Australian Skills Qualification Framework
- Students may also contact the Salford College directly to enquire about a similar course’s unit structure and the mode of delivery to determine whether the replacement course would meet their study needs.
- Salford College will offer a place in a similar VET course of study with a replacement provider without any requirements to pay the replacement provider any tuition fee for any replacement VET units (this is known as the ‘VET Course Assurance Option’). However, the fees payable for the remainder of the replacement course may be different from the fees payable for the original course
- Replacement courses offered will meet the following requirements:
 - The course must lead to the same or a comparable qualification
 - The mode of delivery of the replacement course must be the same, or with the student’s consent, similar to the mode of delivery for the original course
 - The location of the replacement course will be reasonable, with regards to costs, and or time required for a student to travel
 - The student there will be no charge tuition fees for a replacement component of the replacement course
 - Each student who has been affected by the cessation of a VET course will have a period of six (6) months in which to accept the replacement course offer. The Department may extend this period if there are circumstances that justify an extension.
 - Where a student enrolls in a course that is not a replacement course, the student may be required to pay any additional tuition fees, and may not receive any course credits the student may have received if the student had enrolled in the offered replacement course
 - On approval of the College as a replacement provider, Student Services will collect students’ prior enrolment and course information, including the VETSL debt incurred and units attained.
 - Each transferred student will proceed through the College’s enrolment process. Refer to the Enrolment Policy and Procedure.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Management

- Responsible for notifying the Department and facilitating tuition assurance arrangements in the event the College is unable to deliver a VET Student Loan course where the course has commenced but before its completion.
- Will provide the Department information on the equivalency of courses and feasibility of accepting displaced students as a potential replacement provider.

Quality

- Monitors changes to the VET Student Loan tuition assurance arrangements and updates this policy/procedure accordingly.
- Communicates updates in this policy/procedure to internal team members.

Student Services

- Will assist students with the transition into the College and the enrolment process into a replacement course.
- Applies Credit Transfers to student's competency records when enrolling displaced students following the Training, Assessment Policy and Procedure.
- Responsible for informing students when a course has commenced and can no longer be delivered.

Salford College Team Members

- Directs students to this policy/procedure on the website if required or on receiving an enquiry about the College VSL tuition assurance arrangements.
- Follows the direction from Executive Management and this policy/procedure when carrying out the tuition assurance procedure.

Marketing

- Publishes this policy/procedure on the College website, freely accessible to students.

Legislation

- VET Student Loans Act 2016 <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/C2018C00402>
- VET Student Loans Rules 2016 (Sections – 91, 92 and 103) <https://www.legislation.gov.au/Details/F2017C00602>
- Fact sheets <https://www.dese.gov.au/vet-student-loans/vet-information-students/tuition-protection-and-provider-default>