

<b>Institution</b>	Universal Higher Education (UHE)
<b>Policy name</b>	Tuition Fees and Refund Policy
<b>Policy Governance</b>	Board of Directors

## 1. Introduction

The UHE tuition fees are outlined in the fee schedule which is made available to prospective and current students. The purpose of this policy is to provide transparency for UHE students in the application and administration of fees and charges, including refunds. This policy applies to all commencing and continuing domestic and international students and to staff handling refund request.

## 2. Policy principles

UHE is committed to ensure that the tuition fees and charges are clear and transparent. The UHE is committed to ensure compliance with the Commonwealth Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA), the Commonwealth Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 (ESOS), and Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021.

## 3. Determining student course tuition fees

The UHE Board of Directors is responsible for setting tuition fees for all UHE award courses. Initial course fees are determined and approved as part of the business case for new course development. The initial fees are based on the fees approved by the Board of Directors. Subsequent proposed increases will be approved by the Board of Directors. It is expected that the total course fees for each award course will be subjected to annual increases. The total course tuition fee cap of no more than 15% increase a year and no more than 25% increase over 3 years' time. The date of course tuition fee changes to be made on or before 1st October for the coming year and to be informed to all the stakeholders including prospective and enrolled domestic and international students.

## 4. UHE responsibilities

- The UHE will be responsible for the following: providing accurate and accessible information to applicants and enrolled students about all student fees, including course tuition fees, other fees and charges including incidental fees.
- reporting and publishing student fees as required by the relevant legislation.
- providing accessible payment methods
- ensuring non-tuition or incidental fees meet the legislative requirements.

- ensuring there are an accessible, fair, and transparent processes for processing and approving of tuition fee refunds to students in accordance with relevant legislation and policy.
- ensuring that the tuition fees and charges are competitive in line with competitors.

## 5. Student responsibilities

The UHE students are responsible for the following:

- ensuring all information provided for the purpose of enrolment and fees is accurate, including subject enrolment records and personal information.
- reviewing and acting on information about course tuition fees (including tuition fee invoices or Commonwealth Assistance Notice (CAN)) in a timely manner
- paying all fees and charges by the specified due date and/or providing all the necessary information for accessing FEE-HELP by the required date
- payment of fees by specified due date. Failure to pay outstanding fees will result in the cancellation of a student's enrolment.
- notify UHE of circumstances that may impact the payment of fees.

## 6. Approved census dates

Each subject has an approved census date that are published on the UHE website. Students must ensure that their enrolment is finalised by the approved census date for the study period as these forms the basis for determining final tuition fees or FEE-HELP debt.

## 7. Administration of student fees

The Registrar's team is responsible for the administration of student fees and charges. The UHE will issue an enrolment confirmation Notice and liability notice to all students for each term, including the course name and code, the census date, the student liability status, and the total outstanding debt. Student fees will be invoiced in accordance with the enrolment and liability status of the student as recorded in the student information system. Students will be sent their invoices to their student email address. Extensions to the payment deadline will only be approved in special circumstances, must be authorised by the Registrar, and will not exceed 60 days.

## 8. Non-payment of fees

The UHE reserves the right to apply sanctions to students with debts to the UHE. Payment of tuition fees and other fees and charges by the due date is a condition of enrolment. Failure to pay by all fees owing by the deadline may result in the student being prevented from:

- accessing subject results
- accessing online resources, including Library resources

- enrolling in further subjects
- accessing a transcript of results or academic transcript
- graduating from the UHE award course

International students whose enrolment is cancelled due to non-payment of fees will be reported to the Commonwealth Government as required by legislation.

The UHE will notify a student who fails to pay their fees by the required deadline of the intention to cancel their enrolment and list any other penalties that apply as per the list above.

### **9. Refund of fees – domestic students**

Domestic students who defer, withdraw, or take an approved leave of absence from their course and or individual subject (unit of study) prior to the published census date will automatically receive a full refund for any tuition fees paid upfront or will not incur any FEE-HELP debt for the unit(s) of study.

Domestic students who withdraw after the approved census date will not receive a refund for their tuition fees paid upfront or will incur a FEE-HELP debt for each unit of study for the period unless there are special circumstances that are:

- beyond the student's control;
- did not make a full impact on the student until on or after the census date of the subjects;
- made it impracticable for the student to complete the subject(s); and
- upheld with evidence of supporting documentation.

Refer to the *Re-credit of FEE-HELP Balance Procedure* for the process of applying for a FEE-HELP re-credit. Applications for refunds in special circumstances must be made within 12 months of the last day of the teaching term in which the event had occurred.

### **10. Refund of fees – international students**

Refund applications will be assessed by the Registrar, upon receiving the written application. Students will be advised of the outcome by the Registrar in writing within 28 calendar days from the date the application has been received.

If the student is not satisfied with the decision, they may apply for a review of that decision within 28 calendar days from the day the student first received notice of the decision. Appeals will be considered by the Appeals Committee.

For an appeal to be considered, a student must demonstrate in writing, with independent supporting documentation; new information relevant to their case which might change the outcome of the original decision together with a letter stating the reasons why they are applying for reconsideration.

Students will be advised of the outcome of an appeal by the Registrar in writing within 28 calendar days from the date the application has been received.

Students have the right to apply for a review of the reviewable decision that has been confirmed or varied. Information about a review of appeal is provided within the decision advice sent to the student.

Approved refunds will only be paid to the applicant or specified person (s) other than the overseas student who can receive a refund in respect of the overseas student identified in the written agreement and may be made in the student's country by Australian dollar draft or electronic funds transfer in Australian dollar currency.

Where a student has unallocated credit in their account for which they are eligible for a refund, UHE will attempt to refund the amount to the student. Where UHE is not able to refund the credit to the student, and no contact is made by the student, the credit may be forfeited after a limited period.

## **11. Refund Procedures and Process for Tuition Fees Paid Upfront**

- a) The process is started by the student completing and submitting a Refund Application Form (ST03).
- b) This form will be reviewed for completeness and the date received and by whom is entered on the form.
- c) The form is assessed by Finance to review current payment status and amounts owing / in credit are recorded.
- d) The student file is checked together with the Student Management System to confirm the details and to calculate refund based on the eligibility and refund rules.
- e) Before the refund can be processed it must be approved by the Finance Manager and CEO.
- f) The student will be notified refund outcome and applicable refund processed within 28 days of the application.
- g) All documentation relating to a refund (whether granted or not) must be filed in the student file.

## 12. Refunds guidelines and examples for international students

Where an international student has deferred an offer of study after its commencement date, UHE reserves the right to assess any refund applications in line with the commencement and census dates of the student's original offer.

International students will receive a full refund of their tuition fee deposit only for the applicable refund situations as per the below table, where they are able to demonstrate (with relevant supporting documentation), for their eligibility for the refund.

Where an International Student who withdraws from a Course after the agreed starting day is not eligible to apply for a refund of any Tuition Fees, unless another part of this Policy applies.

Where an international student is accepted at UHE and wishes to leave UHE before the completion of six (6) months study in their principal course, the student must apply for a Letter of Release by completing the Application for Letter of Release Form.

If a student who is dissatisfied with a refund decision has the right to request a review of the decision. The student must make this request in writing within 10 days of receiving the initial decision, to: The Academic Registrar at UHE.

Refund Situation	Refund of Course fees	Refund of enrolment fees
1. UHE does not deliver the program for which the international students has paid for the following reasons: The course does not begin on the agreed commencement Date. The offer is withdrawn by the Institute. The course ceases to be provided, at any time after it commences but before it is completed. The course is not provided in full to the student because a sanction has been imposed on the registered provider.	Full refund of unspent fees (if a student does not accept an alternative course offered by UHE)	Yes (only in the first two situations)
2. An international student (offshore or onshore) is refused an Australian Student Visa (copy of refusal letter required) or illness	All prepaid and enrolment fee less \$500	No

<b>Refund Situation</b>	<b>Refund of Course fees</b>	<b>Refund of enrolment fees</b>
or disability prevents the student from taking up the course.		
3. Student default – where UHE has not entered into a written agreement with the student that meets the requirements of section 47B of the ESOS Act (refer 47E (1) (b) (i) of the Act) – that is, a compliant agreement.	All prepaid fees less \$500	No
4. Onshore international student is refused an Australian Student Visa but student already commenced his/her course (copy of refusal letter required); includes visa extension & new applications.	Remaining unspent fees, less \$500	No
5. International student defaults or withdraws from course during visa processing but already commenced his/her course.	Remaining unspent fees, less \$500	No
6. International student withdraws from the course 10 weeks (70 days) or more prior to the eCoE commencement date.	70% of All prepaid fees	No
7. International student withdraws from course 5 weeks (35 days) or more prior to eCoE commencement date.	50% of All prepaid fees	No
8. International student withdraws from the course less than 5 weeks, on the eCoE commencement date or after that date.	No	No
9. If an international student has also paid a deposit for future courses when enrolling in a package of courses, then.	Deposit paid less \$500 for each course	No

Refund Situation	Refund of Course fees	Refund of enrolment fees
10. International student defaults due to one or more of the following acts and CoE(s) gets cancelled by the Institute; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the student failed to pay an amount payable to the provider for the course;</li> <li>• the student breached a condition of their student visa; including non-commencement of the course</li> <li>• misbehaviour by the student/breach of the code of conduct</li> </ul>	No refund for all courses in package	No refund
11. International student is granted permanent residency/obtain visa other than a student visa, after the census date of a study period Refund of Course Fees.	No refund. Full course fees due for the study period as per the student agreement	No

### 13. Tuition Assurance and Protection

All course tuition fee payments are protected by UHE's admission to the Tuition Protection Service (TPS).

Where UHE ceases to operate or to deliver a course or subject in which students are enrolled, UHE mitigates any disadvantage to the students by meeting legislative and regulatory tuition protection requirements.

Students are notified of the opportunity to:

- enrol in a suitable alternative course offered by UHE at no further cost to the student;
- enrol in a suitable replacement course at another provider at no further cost to the student; or
- receive a refund or re-credit of their FEE-HELP balance for subjects not completed.

The CEO, in consultation with the Senior Academic Officers, maintains a current list of suitable replacement courses for each educational offering at UHE, taking the following into account:

- whether the replacement course leads to the same or comparable qualification as the original course;
- what course credits the student may receive for the subjects of the original course successfully completed by the student;
- whether the mode of delivery of the replacement course is the same as the mode of delivery of the original course;
- the location where the replacement course for a student is primarily delivered;
- whether a student who enrolls in the course:
  - will incur additional fees that are unreasonable; and
  - will be able to attend the course without unreasonable impacts on the student's prior commitments.
- any other matter as required under the relevant legislation.

The Tuition Protection Service (TPS) is an initiative of the Australian Government to assist students whose education providers are unable to fully deliver their course of study. The TPS is a placement, refund and loan re-credit service for eligible students who are affected by a provider closing or ceasing to deliver a course.

The TPS provides information and assistance to ensure that students are able to either:

- complete their studies in another course or with another education provider; or
- receive a refund of unspent tuition fees; or
- for domestic students on FEE-HELP/HECS-HELP, receive a loan re-credit for the subjects they received a FEE-HELP /HECS-HELP loan for and they were undertaking when the provider defaulted.

In accordance with the TPS Service Charter 2020, the TPS provides assistance and support to:

- international students on student visas;
- domestic Vocational Education and Training (VET) students accessing a VET Student Loan (VSL); and
- domestic higher education students accessing the Higher Education Loans Program (HELP)(FEE-HELP or HECS-HELP).

In the unlikely event, UHE is unable to deliver a course the student has paid for and does not meet their obligations to either offer an alternative course that the student accepts or pay a refund (or a FEE-HELP re-credit as applicable) of unspent prepaid tuition fees (this is called a provider's 'default obligations'), the TPS will assist the student in finding an alternative course or to get a refund if a suitable alternative is not found.



The TPS can be contacted at: administrator@tps.gov.au or phone 1300 980 434.

For more information on the TPS please refer to <https://tps.gov.au>

The CEO must be prepared to provide upon request the above information relating to the suitability of proposed replacement courses to the TPS (Tuition Protection Service) Director to enable the TPS Director to make a decision regarding suitable replacement courses for a student.

#### **14. Supporting documents for applying a refund of tuition fees paid upfront.**

For supporting documentation to be considered valid, UHE requires:

- The document in English or accompanied by a certified and signed translation from an official translation authority.
- An original document or, a copy certified by a Justice of the Peace (or equivalent international authority).
- Be from an independent authority (not the student or friends or family of the student).
- Specify exact dates surrounding the special circumstances which apply to the student.
- Specify the date the document was written or created.
- Address all criteria of Special Circumstances
- Personal statements alone, including statutory declarations from the student and/or family and friends of the student, are not sufficient to establish refund eligibility.