

2017 Guidelines about Fees

Skills First Program

Department of Education and Training

Purpose

Training Providers that are contracted with the Victorian Government to deliver training subsidised through the *Skills First Program* are bound by the requirements of the VET Funding Contract. The 2017 *Guidelines About Fees* (the Guidelines) must be read in conjunction with the VET Funding Contract.

The purpose of these Guidelines is to describe requirements regarding tuition fees and other fees associated with government subsidised training and to set out financial and accountability requirements with regard to fees. These Guidelines apply to all enrolments in training subsidised through the *Skills First Program*.

SECTION 1

1. General requirements for calculation and levying of fees

- 1.1. The Training Provider must set and publish in a prominent place on its website the standard tuition fee payable for each enrolment in a course and all other fees associated with government funded training including but not limited to those specified in Section 4 of these Guidelines.
- 1.2. Prior to enrolment, the Training Provider must supply each Eligible Individual with a Statement of Fees. The Statement of Fees must provide prospective students with a quote for the total cost to them, for their proposed course of study/enrolment, taking into account their current circumstances (including any eligibility for concession).
- 1.3. The Statement of Fees must include, at a minimum:
 - a. the code, title and currency of the training product in which the learner is to be enrolled, as published on the National Register;
 - b. the training and assessment, and related educational and support services the Training Provider will provide to the learner including the:
 - i. estimated duration;
 - ii. expected locations at which training and assessment will occur;
 - iii. expected modes of delivery;
 - iv. name and contact details of any approved third party that will provide training and/or assessment, and related educational and support services to the learner on the Training Provider's behalf; and
 - v. any work placement or practical placement arrangements.
 - c. the hourly tuition fees relevant to the individual enrolment taking account of any applicable concessions or waiver/exemptions;
 - d. the approximate value of the government contribution expressed in dollars; and
 - e. any other applicable fees, such as student services, amenities, goods or materials.
- 1.4. The Training Provider may provide the required Statement of Fees electronically, provided that:
 - a. each prospective student can clearly determine the fees relevant to their specific enrolment (e.g. full fee, Entitlement to Funded Training, concession, etc);
 - b. the information is easy to find and easy for each prospective student to understand as it relates to their proposed enrolment;
 - c. prospective students are able to record (e.g. print or e-mail to themselves) a document confirming their details and relevant fees for future reference;
 - d. a document (electronic or otherwise) is created confirming that a Statement of Fees was generated for an individual student and providing the content of the Statement, and in such a format that could be audited; and
 - e. the electronic documentation contains all the information described in Clause 1.3.

VET FEE-HELP where a student is funded under the Skills First Program

- 1.5. Where an Eligible Individual, whose training is funded under the *Skills First Program*, is accessing VET FEE HELP to pay the tuition fee, the Training Provider must inform the Department and the Eligible Individual if it charges a tuition fee in excess of the Training Provider's standard tuition fee (as published by the Training Provider in accordance with Clause 1.1 of these Guidelines).

SECTION 2

2. Tuition fee waivers/exemptions

- 2.1. The Training Provider must allow tuition fee waivers/exemptions in accordance with this Section 2 of these Guidelines.
- 2.2. Prior to the commencement of training, the Training Provider must sight and retain copies of all documentation demonstrating an individual's eligibility for the tuition fee waiver/exemption granted by the Training Provider for audit or review purposes and to meet the record keeping requirements set out in Section 6 of these Guidelines.
- 2.3. The Training Provider must report to the Department all tuition fee waivers/exemptions granted by the Training Provider in accordance with the Victorian VET Student Statistical Collection Guidelines as issued by the Department from time to time.

Judy Lazarus Transition Centre

- 2.4. The Training Provider must not charge a tuition fee for enrolment by an individual who is from the Judy Lazarus Transition Centre (as a prisoner within the meaning of the *Corrections Act 1986*).
- 2.5. The Training Provider must retain a copy of written confirmation from the management of the Judy Lazarus Transition Centre that the individual meets the requirements of Clause 2.4.

Young people on community based orders

- 2.6. The Training Provider must not charge a tuition fee for enrolment by an individual who is required to undertake the course pursuant to a community based order made under the *Children, Youth and Families Act 2005*.
- 2.7. The Training Provider must retain a copy of written confirmation from the relevant Youth Justice Unit of the Victorian Department of Human Services that the individual meets the requirements of clause 2.6.

Young People Transitioning From Care Initiative (Provider Network Training Providers only)

- 2.8. The Training Provider must not charge a tuition fee for enrolment by an individual referred to them with a standard Young People Transitioning From Care Referral Form.
- 2.9. The Training Provider must retain the original Young People Transitioning From Care Referral Form, and return a copy to the relevant referring agency.

SECTION 3

3. Concession fees

- 3.1. The Training Provider must allow concessions on standard fees in accordance with this Section 3 of these Guidelines.
- 3.2. The concession fee must be 20 per cent of the Training Provider's published standard tuition fee as described in Clause 1.1, being the fee that the Training Provider would have charged a non-concession government subsidised student in the same course at that time.
- 3.3. If an individual who was previously eligible for a concession under this Section 3 becomes ineligible for the concession before the completion of the hours for which they have paid tuition fees, this does not affect the tuition fees payable for the enrolment.
- 3.4. Prior to the commencement of training, the Training Provider must sight and retain (electronically or in hard copy) copies of all documentation demonstrating an individual's eligibility for the fee concession granted by the Training Provider for audit or review purposes and to meet the record keeping requirements set out in Section 6 of these Guidelines. Where a concession card is

presented to the Training Provider via a Digital Wallet through a Centrelink Express Plus mobile application, the Training Provider must sight and authenticate the card by viewing the card directly through the Centrelink Express Plus mobile application on the cardholder's mobile device. These cards may not be sighted via a screen shot of the card that is e-mailed or otherwise produced.

- 3.5. The Training Provider must report to the Department all fee concessions granted by the Training Provider in accordance with the Victorian VET Student Statistical Collection Guidelines as issued by the Department from time to time.
- 3.6. Training Providers should exercise reasonable judgement where a prospective student is not able to produce appropriate proof of concession prior to the commencement of training. For example, the Department would consider it reasonable to allow students a one week grace period to provide their proof of concession, provided that this was documented within a business process and able to be audited.

General Concessions

- 3.7. For enrolments in courses at the Certificate IV level and below, the Training Provider must charge the concession fee to an individual who, prior to the commencement of training, holds a current and valid:
 - a. Health Care Card issued by the Commonwealth;
 - b. Pensioner Concession Card; or
 - c. Veteran's Gold Card; or
 - d. an alternative card or concession eligibility criterion approved by the Minister for the purposes of these Guidelines.
- 3.8. The concessions provided for in Clause 3.7 (a) and (b) also apply to a dependant spouse or dependant child of a card holder.
- 3.9. The Training Provider must retain a copy of the relevant concession card specified at Clause 3.7:
 - a. in hard copy or electronically scanned copy where a physical card is presented; or
 - b. its equivalent record as extracted from Centrelink Confirmation eServices; or
 - c. where the concession card is presented via a Digital Wallet through a Centrelink Express Plus mobile application, of which a copy is not possible, the Training Provider must make a written declaration and attach it to the student's file stating that the digital concession card has been sighted in accordance with Clause 3.7. The declaration must include:
 - i. Name of the authorised delegate who sighted the digital concession card;
 - ii. Date the digital concession card was sighted;
 - iii. Document number of the concession card; and
 - iv. Name of concession holder.
- 3.10. For individuals entitled to a concession under Clauses 3.7 or 3.8 that are also referred Job Seekers with a standard Job Seeker Referral Form; the Training Provider must retain a copy of the original Job Seeker Referral Form and return the original to the individual. On enrolment, a copy of this form must also be returned by the Training Provider to the Job Seeker's referring agency.
- 3.11. The Department will not make a contribution to the Training Provider toward revenue forgone for referred Job Seekers as a result of charging Job Seekers the concession fee. With the prior agreement of the referring agency, the Training Provider must invoice the referring agency directly for the portion of the tuition fee not covered by the referred Job Seeker.

Indigenous Completions Initiative

- 3.12. Under the Indigenous Completions Initiative, for enrolments in a course at any level the Training Provider must charge the concession fee to individuals who self-identify as being of Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander descent (and are reported as such through the "Indigenous Student Identifier" field of the Student Statistical Report).

- 3.13. The Training Provider must retain a copy of the enrolment form on which the individual self-identified as indigenous.

SECTION 4

4. Other fees

- 4.1. The Training Provider must publish on its website all other fees associated with government subsidised training including but not limited to any student services and amenities fees, fees for goods, services or materials and administration fees.
- 4.2. If the Training Provider imposes any other fees, including but not limited to those outlined in Clause 4.1, the Training Provider must supply the individual with itemised details of the fees *prior* to enrolment as part of a Statement of Fees.

SECTION 5

5. Refunds

- 5.1. The Training Provider must supply each individual with a clear refund policy *prior* to enrolment that is fair, reasonable and covers scenarios relating to withdrawal by the student, course cancellation, closure of the Training Provider and any other reasonable matter and that meets the standards of the Training Provider's relevant regulator.
- 5.2. Notwithstanding Clause 5.1, enrolments in courses eligible for VET FEE-HELP are subject to VET FEE-HELP requirements.

SECTION 6

6. Accounts and records of tuition fees and other fees

- 6.1. The accounts and records kept by the Training Provider must clearly distinguish income for fee-for-service training from government subsidised training.
- 6.2. The Training Provider must establish and maintain a separate general ledger account to record receipt of income from fees for tuition and the payment of refunds of tuition fees.
- 6.3. The Training Provider shall keep records, including evidence, to support any claim for a contribution towards revenue foregone as a result of granting concessions or waivers/exemptions.