

# Student Review Procedures for Re-crediting a FEE-HELP Balance

## 1. Introduction

This procedure relates to the process Performing Arts Education Pty Ltd trading as Australian Performing Arts Conservatory (“APAC”) will follow to re-credit a Student’s FEE-HELP balance when a Student withdraws from a Unit of Study after Census Date, or has been unable to successfully complete a Unit of Study, and special circumstances apply.

### 1.1. Purpose

This document provides the framework and mechanism for APAC to re-credit a Student’s FEE-HELP balance.

### 1.2. Scope

This procedure applies to APAC FEE-HELP Students.

## 2. Procedure

### 2.1. Incurring a FEE-HELP Debt

A Student who is, or would be, eligible for a HELP loan and has requested FEE-HELP assistance, who withdraws from a Unit of Study on or before the Census Date for that Unit will not incur a FEE-HELP debt for the tuition fees for that Unit.

Students who have requested FEE-HELP assistance who remain enrolled after the published Census Date will incur a FEE-HELP debt for the Units in which they are enrolled. A Student who withdraws from a Unit after the published Census Date for that Unit will incur a FEE-HELP debt for that Unit.

### 2.2. Re-crediting a FEE-HELP Balance

Students who withdraw from a Unit after the published Census Date, or fail to complete a Unit, may apply to have their FEE-HELP balance re-credited with respect to the Unit if they believe special circumstances apply in accordance with the following procedures.

### 2.3. Special Circumstances

If a Student withdraws from a Unit after the published Census Date for that Unit, or has been unable to successfully complete a Unit and believes this was due to special circumstances, the Student may apply to have their FEE-HELP balance re-credited for the affected Unit/s.

APAC will re-credit the Student's FEE-HELP Balance if it is satisfied that special circumstances apply where:

- these circumstances were beyond the Student's control; and
- these circumstances did not make their full impact on the Student until on, or after the Census Date; and
- these circumstances were such that it was impracticable for the Student to complete the requirements for the Unit in the period during which the Student undertook or was to undertake the Unit.

For circumstances to be beyond a Student's control, the situation should be that which a reasonable person would consider is not due to the Student's action or inaction, either direct or indirect, and for which the Student is not responsible. The situation must be unusual, uncommon or abnormal to be considered special circumstances.

#### **2.3.1. Special Circumstances Do Not Include:**

- lack of knowledge or understanding of requirements for FEE-HELP assistance; or
- a Student's incapacity to repay a FEE-HELP debt (repayments are income contingent and the Student can apply to the Australian Taxation Office for a deferral of a compulsory repayment in certain circumstances).

### **3. Procedure**

#### **3.1. Re-Credit of a Student's FEE-HELP Balance**

Each application for re-credit of a Student's FEE-HELP balance will be considered on its merits together with all supporting documentation substantiating the special circumstances claim.

The Admissions and Compliance Manager is the designated officer responsible for the assessment of a Student's request for a re-credit of their FEE-HELP balance due to special circumstances and for the initial decision regarding the request.

A Student must apply in writing to the Admissions and Compliance Manager at [admin@apac.edu.au](mailto:admin@apac.edu.au) within 12 months of the withdrawal date, or if the Student has not withdrawn, within 12 months of the specified completion date of the Unit.

APAC has the discretion to waive this requirement if it is satisfied that it was not possible for the application to be made within the 12 month period. Relevant supporting documentation will be required to substantiate the claim.

The application for re-crediting a FEE-HELP balance must include details of the:

- Unit(s) for which a Student is seeking to have a FEE-HELP balance re-credited and
- special circumstances as referred to above, including supporting documentation.

APAC will consider each application within 28 days of receipt of the application. It will consider each request to re-credit a FEE-HELP balance in accordance with the requirements of the Act. Applicants will be notified in writing of the decision within 28 days.

### **3.2. Review of Decision**

Where APAC makes a decision NOT to re-credit a Student's FEE-HELP balance, that decision may be subject to review.

If a Student is not satisfied with the decision made by APAC, the Student may apply, within 28 days of the receipt of the original decision, for a review of the decision. The application for review must:

- be made within 28 days of receipt of the original decision;
- include the date of the original decision;
- state fully the reasons for applying for the review;
- include any additional relevant evidence.

Applications should be made in writing to the CEO via email to [admin@apac.com.au](mailto:admin@apac.com.au) - where a review officer will be assigned to the application. The Review Officer is senior to the designated officer responsible for the original decision and was not involved in making the original decision to be reviewed.

The Review Officer will:

- acknowledge receipt of the application for review of a decision in writing within 10 working days; and
- inform the Student that if the Review Officer has not advised them of a decision within 45 days of receipt of the application for review, it is taken that the Review Officer has confirmed the original decision.

The Review Officer will then:

- review the information from the original decision and then assess any new evidence provided by the Student;
- provide written notice to the Student of the decision, setting out the reasons for the decision;
- inform the Student of their right to apply to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal if they disagree with the Review Decision, and timelines involved (see below).

### **3.3. Reconsideration by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal**

At the time of the original decision, and at the time of the subsequent review decision, the Student will be notified of their review rights and responsibilities. The relevant officer will inform a Student in writing of their right to appeal to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal (AAT) if they are not satisfied with the outcome and the contact details of the closest AAT office and the approximate costs of lodging an appeal. The application must be lodged at the AAT within 28 days of receiving written notice of the review decision. This time limitation can be extended in limited circumstances by order of the AAT.

Full details of the application process and fees payable are available on the AAT's website: [www.aat.gov.au](http://www.aat.gov.au). An application fee may have to be paid. Applications cannot proceed until the fee has been paid or waived. Applications for fee waiver must be made to the AAT. Refer to the AAT website for more details. Contact details of the closest AAT office can also be found on the AAT website: [www.aat.gov.au/ContactUs.htm](http://www.aat.gov.au/ContactUs.htm) and are shown in Appendix 1 of this policy.

The Secretary of the Department, or the Secretary's delegate, will be the respondent for cases that are brought before the AAT. Upon the Department's receipt of a notification from the AAT, the Department will notify APAC that an appeal has been lodged. Upon receipt of this notification from the Department, the Review Officer will provide the Department with copies of all the documents that are relevant to the appeal within five business days.

## **4. Responsibilities**

### **4.1. Chief Executive Officer (CEO)**

The CEO will oversee all received applications for re-credit of a Student's FEE-HELP balance and provide approval to the Administration Manager.

### **4.2. Admissions and Compliance Manager**

The Administration Manager is the designated officer responsible for the assessment of a student's request for a re-credit of their FEE-HELP balance due to special circumstances and for the initial decision regarding the request.

### **4.3. Review Officer**

The Review Officer will review, assess and respond to applications within the time frames outlined in section 3.2 of this document.

### **4.4. FEE-HELP Paying Student**

Students are responsible for ensuring that all FEE-HELP balance re-credit application documentation is complete and supporting documentation is submitted at the time of application.

Students must inform the Administration Manager promptly if they wish to withdraw from a unit as outlined in the Domestic Student Refund Policy and Procedure.

## 5. Relevant Documents

- APAC Domestic Student Refund Policy and Procedure
- APAC Application for Refund Form
- APAC Application for Withdrawal Form
- APAC Privacy Policy and Procedure
- APAC Records Management Policy and Procedure
- APAC Student Complaints and Appeals Policy and Procedure
- Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021
- Higher Education Support Act (HESA) 2003

## 6. Definitions

- **The Act:** Refers to the Higher Education Support Act (HESA) 2003.
- **Unit or Unit of Study:** A Unit of Study that a Student may undertake with APAC for which the Student may access FEE-HELP assistance to pay for all or part of their tuition fees.
- **Student:** Refers to students, who are Australian citizens, New Zealand citizens that meet the long-term residency requirements or permanent humanitarian visa holders who will be resident in Australia for the duration of their Units of Study, and who access FEE-HELP assistance for payment of all or part of their tuition fees in respect of the Units of Study in which they are enrolled.
- **Census Date:** A published date set by APAC, no earlier than 20% of the way through a Unit of Study.
- **Tuition Fees:** Fees paid for a Unit of Study that is approved for FEE-HELP assistance and applies to Students who are, or would be entitled to FEE-HELP assistance under the Act.
- **The Department:** The Commonwealth of Australia represented by the department which has the responsibility for administering the Act.

## Version Control and Document Owner

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