

Fee Policy – Domestic Students



Policy Number	NAC04
Approving Authority	NIDA Board of Directors
Date Implemented	February 2026
Current Version	6.1
Date of Review	June 2027
Contact Officer	Director Learning and Innovation
Related Policies, Procedures and Documents	• Offer Letter • Fee Schedules – Domestic Students • NIDA Student Charter (incorporating the NIDA Student Code of Conduct) • NIDA Student Handbook • Student Complaints and Academic Appeals Policy • NIDA Application for Re-credit or Refund Form • Student Misconduct Policy • Deferral, Suspension, Withdrawal, and Cancellation of Study Policy – Domestic students

1. SCOPE OF POLICY

This policy applies to:

- a. All fees inclusive of tuition, student contribution amounts, student services, amenities and goods and services.
- b. All domestic students enrolled in accredited higher education or vocational courses.
- c. All domestic students with prior enrolment, withdrawn or deferred, where the relevant fee liability was incurred while they were enrolled or is directly related to their enrolment.

The Director Learning and Innovation is responsible for:

- Ensuring the accessibility of this policy by staff and students
- Implementation of this policy.

2. PRINCIPLES

1. Under the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA), NIDA is required to charge and subsequently report student contribution amounts and tuition fees.
2. Student contribution amounts are payable by Commonwealth supported students. The Department of Education publishes the maximum student contribution amounts for Commonwealth supported places. Student contribution amounts are approved by the Board of Directors and are published annually in advance of the commencement of an enrolment period.
3. NIDA sets tuition fees for fee-paying students who are not commonwealth supported. When setting tuition fees NIDA considers the cost of delivery of the course as well as strategic and business considerations. Tuition fees are approved by the Board of Directors and are published

- annually in advance of the commencement of an enrolment period.
4. If a student's residency status changes NIDA will apply any relevant adjustment to the next scheduled payment after notification.
 5. NIDA will endeavour to support students whose study has been impacted by exceptional circumstances.
 6. NIDA will manage complaints in a timely manner in alignment with the principles of natural justice, regulatory requirements and the Student Complaints and Academic Appeals Policy.
 7. This written agreement, and the right to make complaints, does not affect the rights of the student to take action under the Australian Consumer Law.

3. POLICY

Tuition fees apply to vocational education courses and higher education courses for students who are not allocated a Commonwealth Supported Place.

NIDA receives an allocation of Commonwealth Supported Places from the Department of Education. Allocation of places will be in accordance with the following principles:

- (i) Priority will be given to students in Bachelor of Fine Arts courses.
- (ii) Where there is not sufficient places for all enrolled Bachelor of Fine Arts students, the methodology for allocating places will be approved by the Chair and Deputy Chairs of the NIDA Board of Directors upon the recommendation of the Executive. Any methodology will comply with legislative requirements.

3.1 Payment of Tuition fees – Domestic Students

- 3.1.1 Higher education students are financially liable for all subjects in which they are enrolled as at the census date for that subject. Vocational education and training students are liable for VET tuition fees according to the VET term census date.
- 3.1.2 Tuition fees are payable upfront on a per study period basis and must be paid within 28 days of invoicing; or Eligible students may borrow all or part of their tuition fees through FEE HELP or VET Student Loans. Commonwealth Supported Students may defer their student contribution under HECS-HELP.
- 3.1.3 Eligible students entering designated Commonwealth supported programs must submit a *Request for Commonwealth Support* and *HECS-HELP* form by the first census date of the semester.
- 3.1.4 Commonwealth supported students who fail to either pay their student contribution or provide their tax file number by the census date will have their enrolment cancelled in line with HESA requirements. However, they can continue as a student for the semester if they pay the NIDA domestic undergraduate tuition fee rate.
- 3.1.5 Non-Commonwealth supported domestic students who wish to access FEE-HELP must submit a *Request for FEE-HELP* loan form by the first census date of the semester. Students wanting to access a VET Student Loan (VSL) must submit an electronic Commonwealth Assistance Form (eCAF) at the start of their course, before the first census date of the course.
- 3.1.6 Non-commonwealth supported domestic students paying upfront who are experiencing financial hardship may apply to the Head of Student Services and Operations for a payment plan. Payment plans are provided at the discretion of NIDA management.
- 3.1.7 All students who fail and are required to repeat a subject are obliged to pay for both the first and any further attempts at that subject.

3.2 Refunds of Tuition Fees and Re-crediting of FEE HELP Balances

- 3.2.1 A domestic student, who lodges a written request for withdrawal from a Unit of Study on or before the published census date, will be withdrawn without financial penalty from the Unit of Study in which he or she is enrolled.
- 3.2.2 A domestic student who lodges a written request for withdrawal from a Unit of Study after the census date will not receive a refund of any tuition fees paid upfront and/or will incur a HELP/VET Student Loan debt for the Unit of Study.
- 3.2.3 A student can apply for a refund of upfront tuition fees or to have their HECS-HELP, FEE-HELP or VET Student Loan balance removed or re-accredited for an incomplete Unit of Study if the student withdraws or ceases their studies in that Unit of Study after the census date because of exceptional circumstances, and as a consequence of these exceptional circumstances does not complete the requirements of the Unit of Study. Applications for refunds or recrediting of HECS-HELP, FEE- HELP or VET student loan balances must be made using the NIDA Application for Refund [eForm](#).
- 3.2.4 All applications must be made via the Tuition Refund form as soon as practicable after withdrawal/cessation of the incomplete Unit/s of Study but no later than 12 months after the withdrawal/cessation date for Higher Education students and 12 months after the census date for VET students.
- 3.2.5 A student must provide independent supporting documentary evidence and demonstrate that there are exceptional circumstances as per the definition outlined in this policy and that these circumstances:
- Were beyond the student's control
 - Did not make their full impact on the student until on, or after, the census date; and
 - Made it impracticable for the student to complete the requirements for the Unit of Study during the period in which the student undertook or was to undertake the Unit of Study.
- 3.2.6 NIDA may waive the requirement for an application to be made before the end of the application period, on the ground that it would not be, or was not possible for the application to be made before the end of that period
- 3.2.7 A student has the right to apply to the CEO for a review of a decision not to refund upfront tuition fees or re-credit the student's FEE-HELP balance
- 3.2.8 A VET student's HELP balance can be re-credited under Division 2 or 3 of Part 6 of the Act;
- A VET student may apply to the Secretary of the Department of Education (the Secretary) for the student's FEE-HELP balance to be re-credited under section 71 of the Act due to:
- NIDA, or a person acting on behalf of NIDA, engaged in unacceptable conduct in relation to the student's application for the VET student loan; or
 - NIDA has failed to comply with the Act on an instrument under the Act and the failure has adversely affected the student.
- 3.2.9 Applications for re-crediting under section 71 of the Act must be made within 5 years after the census day for the course, or the part of the course, concerned, or within that period as extended by the Secretary.
- 3.2.10 There is no charge for reconsideration or review of decisions, other than review by the Administrative Appeals Tribunal;

- (i) that the Secretary may re-credit a student's FEE HELP balance in relation to special circumstances if a course provider:
 - a. is unable to act or is being wound up or has been dissolved; or
 - b. has failed to act and the Secretary is satisfied that the failure is unreasonable.

3.3 Non-Payment of Fees

Students who are paying up-front fees, have outstanding tuition fees and do not have a payment plan in place will not be allowed to attend classes or take part in productions. Tuition fees that are outstanding beyond 90 days of invoicing may result in a student's enrolment being cancelled.

3.4 Debt and Indebtedness

Students with outstanding tuition fees or owing monies to the library for lost or non-returned books will not receive a statement of results, academic transcript and will not be able to graduate until all fees are paid.

3.5 Communication

All communication regarding fee related matters, including invoicing, receipting and refunds are managed by student email.

3.6 Record Keeping

All payments and receipts for tuition fees are managed through the student management system software (SMS). All records of variations to fees are saved electronically to the student's SMS account.

4. DEFINITIONS

Term	Definition
Accredited Course	A program that is recognised under the Australian Quality Framework (AQF) and leads to the conferral of a degree or the award of a certificate or diploma.
Census Date	The final date for a student to apply for or withdraw from government funded FEE-HELP or VET Student Loan assistance and the date at which a student incurs a FEE-HELP or VET Student Loan debt for the subjects or units in which they are enrolled. The census date is set by the education provider and for both Higher Education and VET it is no earlier than 20% of the subject/unit duration.
Commonwealth Supported Place	A Commonwealth supported place (CSP) is a higher education place for which the Commonwealth Government contributes towards the cost of a student's education, thereby subsidising their tuition cost.

Commonwealth Supported Student	A student in receipt of a Commonwealth supported place (CSP).
Course Commencement	The published effective start date of a course and is inclusive of the orientation/induction period.
Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances	Compassionate or Compelling Circumstances are those that are outside of the control of the student, and which have an impact on the student's course progress or wellbeing. These could include, but are not limited to: • Serious illness or injury, where a medical certificate states that the student was unable to attend classes. • Bereavement of close family members such as parents or grandparents, major political upheaval or natural disaster in the student's home country requiring emergency travel and this has impacted on the student's studies; or • A traumatic experience; or inability to begin study on the course commencement date due to the delay in receiving a student visa.
Domestic student	A student who is a citizen or permanent resident of Australia, a citizen of New Zealand or the holder of an Australian humanitarian visa.
Financial Hardship	A student was able to afford the fees when they commenced studying but a change in circumstances during the course resulted in difficulty being able to make the semester payments by the due date.
HELP	Higher Education Loan Program (HELP)
HELP Balance	Total tuition loan fees accumulated under any of the HELP schemes including FEE-HELP and Vet Student Loans
Higher Education Course	A course that is a Bachelor or Masters course.
Offer	The written advice to an applicant that NIDA is offering them a place in an accredited course.
Potential student	An applicant for an accredited course.
Staff	All people employed by NIDA whether on continuing, permanent, fixed term, casual or traineeship basis.
Student	Any person enrolled in an accredited course at NIDA, who was enrolled in an accredited course at the time the complaint relates to.
Student contribution amount	The subsidised amount that a Commonwealth supported student pays.
Study Period	A published period of time scheduled for the delivery of a subject or Unit of Study. For Higher Education at NIDA it is a semester and for Vocational programs it is known as a term.

Unit/Unit of Study	A qualification is broken down into a number of Units of Study, which each have a Census Date. Each Unit of Study comprises a proportion of the learning and assessment that contributes to completion of the whole course.
Vocational Education Course	A course that is a Certificate III or Diploma course.

5. CHANGE HISTORY

Date	Change Description	Reason for Change	Author	Version
August 2026	Update reference to Student Complaints and Academic Appeals Policy	New policy	Head of Quality and Compliance	6.1
February 2026	Add details about Commonwealth Supported Places. Correction to 3.2.4 and 3.2.7 to ensure alignment with Higher Education Support Act	Addition of Commonwealth Supported Places	Head of Quality and Compliance	6.0
December 2025	Editorial update to policy titles	Release of new RTO Outcome Standards	Academic Compliance Manager	5.1
May 2024	Modification of scope to include all goods and services. Change to role responsible for implementation.	Review of P and P	SSQA	05
November 2022	Update of VSL information and amendment of some clauses regarding payment plans			04
May 2020	Combined two policies into a single policy for domestic students & New Name	Review of all P&P	Director SELQA	03
September 2014	Nida Policy on Re-crediting Fee-Help balance and removal of Fee-Help or VET Fee-Help debt		Director of Education	14/02998 14/06491
September 2014	Tuition Fee Refund Policy		Director of Education	14/06496

6. BENCHMARKING and ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This policy has been benchmarked against policies and practice from a number of higher education providers and other sources

Relevant policy documents from the following are gratefully acknowledged:

- AFTRS
- Sydney University
- UNSW
- National Art School

Legislation and Regulatory Frameworks	Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA) TEQSA Act 2011 National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students ESOS Act FEE-HELP Guidelines VET Student Loans Act 2016 (VSL Act) VET Student Loans Rules 2016 (VSL Rules) National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcome Standards for Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025 ASQA Guidance and Resources
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