

Tuition Fees Refund Policy

Section 1 - Definitions

(1) For the purpose of this Policy:

- a. 'The Assessor' - Student Services staff member assessing a refund application in special circumstances in accordance with the refund rules, policies and guidelines. SCU International staff member assessing a standard refund application.
- b. 'Census dates' - The date prescribed by the University in accordance with the [Higher Education Support Act 2003](#) as the date on which a student's enrolment is taken to be finalised. A domestic student cannot enrol or withdraw from units after census date without significant academic and/or financial penalties.
- c. 'Course' - A course of study is a higher education award or enabling course. This may include award courses such as the Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Science or non-award and enabling courses such as Preparing for Success.
- d. 'Domestic student' - A student who is an Australian Citizen, New Zealand citizen or the holder of a permanent visa.
- e. 'EFTSL' - One Equivalent Full Time Student Load (EFTSL) is a measure of the study load, for a year, of a student undertaking a course of study on a full-time basis.
- f. 'HECS HELP' - Assistance available that provides a 10% discount facility and loan option to help eligible Commonwealth supported students pay their student contribution amount.
- g. 'FEE HELP' - A loan scheme to help eligible non Commonwealth supported (fee paying) students pay their tuition fees
- h. 'International Student' - A student who is a citizen of another country and is studying in Australia. A student may be an onshore international student studying on campus in Australia, or an offshore student studying by distance education.
- i. 'Study Period' - A session, trimester or semester so designated
- j. 'Unit of Study' - A subject or unit that a student may undertake with SCU that could be undertaken as part of a course of study.

Section 2 - Policy Statement

Part A - Policy Declaration

(2) This policy establishes a standard for the assessment and processing of the refund of tuition fees for Southern Cross University (SCU) students in both standard and exceptional or special circumstances.

(3) This policy applies to any student of the University who has paid a tuition fee.

Part B - Policy Description

(4) This policy outlines the standard for refunding fees in accordance with SCU refund rules where the student provides official advice of withdrawal from a course, unit or variation to enrolment.

(5) The policy also contains provisions for the refund of tuition fees in accordance with the SCU refund rules where exceptional or special circumstances are demonstrated to exist.

(6) This policy recognises that exceptional or special circumstances relating to medical, personal/family, employment or course related situations may affect SCU students after published critical dates which impact on their capacity to complete their studies. Where appropriately demonstrated, these circumstances make them eligible for a refund of tuition fees.

(7) This policy applies to all tuition fee paying students (both international and domestic) who in both standard or under exceptional or special circumstances may be eligible for a fee refund.

(8) Where appropriate, the provisions for the refund of tuition fees are in line with the [Higher Education Support Act 2003 \(HESA\)](#) which allows a student with a HECS HELP or FEE HELP balance to apply for remission.

Section 3 - Related Policies, Legislation, and Strategic Priorities

(9) This policy is to be read in conjunction with the information listed in the Associated Information page.

Section 4 - Responsibilities

(10) Students are responsible for providing official advice of withdrawal from a course, unit or variation to enrolment in accordance with the Rules Relating to Awards.

(11) In exceptional or special circumstances, students are responsible for providing sufficient valid information and documentation with their application to enable a full, fair and reasonable assessment of the impact of the exceptional or special circumstances on which the application is based.

(12) Student Services are responsible for processing refunds in accordance with the Rules Relating to Awards.

(13) In exceptional or special circumstances, Student Services is responsible for ensuring that an Application for Refund of Fees after Census Date in Special Circumstances is administered and assessed according to this Policy.

Section 5 - Procedures

Part C - Standard Refunds

Domestic Students

(14) A domestic student who officially withdraws from a course or unit before the relevant census date for the study period has passed shall receive a full refund for all units for which tuition fees have been paid.

(15) A domestic student will incur the full financial liability for a unit if the official advice of withdrawal from a course or unit is submitted after the census date for the study period has passed unless exceptional or special circumstances can be demonstrated as outlined in Part D.

International Onshore Students

(16) An international student shall be entitled to a refund of fees in the circumstances indicated below:

- a. Full refund of fees paid if an offer of a place is withdrawn. However if the offer was made on the basis of incorrect or incomplete information supplied by the applicant, the University shall retain 10% of fees for one study period as well.
- b. Full refund of fees paid by a student if the student is excluded before the start of the study period.
- c. If the Director, Student Experience Team receives from the student official notice of withdrawal from course:
 - i. Commencing Students: more than four weeks before the start of the study period, all tuition fees paid are refundable less an administrative fee of 10% of the tuition fee applicable to that study period plus a full refund of fees paid in advance in respect of a following study period;
 - ii. Continuing Students: before the start of the study period, the student shall be entitled to a full refund of tuition fees applicable to the study period and a full refund of fees paid in advance in respect of a following study period;
 - iii. Commencing and Continuing Students:
 - on or before the last day of the fifth week of the study period, the student shall be entitled to a refund of 50% of the fee applicable to that study period and a full refund of fees paid in advance in respect of a following study period.
 - after the last day of the fifth teaching week of the study period, the student will not be eligible for any refund of the fee applicable to that study period (unless special or exceptional circumstances apply) but will be eligible for a full refund of fees paid in advance in respect of a following study period.
- d. If the Director, Student Experience Team receives from a student official notice of withdrawal from a unit or units representing less than withdrawal from course:
 - i. on or before the last day of the second teaching week of the study period the student shall be entitled to a full refund of the tuition fee applicable to that/those unit/s;
 - ii. on or before the last day of the fifth week of the study period the student shall be entitled to a refund of 50% of the fee applicable to that/those unit/s;
 - iii. beyond the fifth teaching week of the study period, the student shall not be eligible for a refund of the fee paid for that/those unit/s unless special or exceptional circumstances apply.
- e. If a course starts on the agreed day but the student does not start the course on that day (and has not previously withdrawn) the student is not entitled to a refund of fees unless the Director, Student Experience Team receives from the student written notice of withdrawal from course.
- f. The refund of fees provided in clause (16)a shall be paid to the student by the provider no later than 14 days after the day on which the offer of a place is withdrawn.
 - i. Clause (16)f is compliant with the [Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000](#) s.27 (3) and [Education \(Overseas Students\) Regulation 1998 \(QLD\)](#), Section 7(1) (d).

(17) In the unlikely event that Southern Cross University is unable to deliver a course in full, a student will be offered a refund of all the course money paid to date.

International Offshore students

(18) International offshore students studying with Southern Cross University through an educational partnership or collaboration should contact their local provider for information about tuition fee refunds.

English Language Students

(19) Special circumstances apply where the circumstances:

- a. are beyond the student's control;
- b. do not make their full impact on the student until on or after the critical dates outlined below; and

- c. make it impracticable for the student to complete the requirements for the course during the period during which the student undertook, or was to undertake, the course.

(20) Refunds are available in the following circumstances:

- a. If a student cancels their enrolment 4 weeks or more before the course begins, they will receive a part refund, except for the \$220 enrolment fee, the \$195 placement fee, and a \$100 administration charge and less any applicable agent's fees.
- b. If a student cancels their enrolment less than 4 weeks before their course begins, they will receive a part refund, except for the \$220 enrolment fee, the \$195 placement fee, a \$100 administration charge and one week's tuition fee of \$310, and less any applicable agent's fees.
- c. If a student cancels their enrolment after their course begins, there are no refunds.
- d. If the English Language Centre is unable to deliver a course in which a student has enrolled, they will receive a full refund, less any applicable agent's fees.

(21) English Language students are required to submit a written request for a refund to the Director of Studies at the relevant campus. Written requests should clearly explain the reasons for requesting a full or partial refund, and provide supporting documentation.

International Onshore Students studying in Western Australia.

(22) The Department of Education Services in Western Australia has additional criteria which must be fulfilled to maintain [CRICOS](#) registration. Please refer to Appendix One.

Part D - Refunds in Special or Exceptional Circumstances

(23) To be eligible to apply a student must meet the following conditions:

- a. They are or were enrolled in a unit(s) as part of a course of study with SCU, (including award and non-award study); and
- b. They have paid the full tuition fee/s for the unit(s); and
- c. They have not successfully completed the requirements of the unit(s) during the study period; and
- d. They apply in accordance with the procedures outlined below

Applications

(24) Tuition full fee paying students are required to lodge an Application for Remission or Refund of Fees after Census Date Due to Special Circumstances.

(25) Applications should be lodged with:

Director, Student Experience Team

Southern Cross University

PO Box 157

LISMORE NSW 2480

(26) Application forms and instructions are available from Student Services or the Student Services website at www.scu.edu.au/studentservices

(27) Student Services will allocate a case reference number and send a letter acknowledging receipt of the application normally within 10 working days.

(28) Applications must be lodged in writing on the prescribed form within 12 months of the date that the student withdrew from the unit(s) of study. If the student did not withdraw, the application must be lodged within 12 months of the last day of the study period in which they were enrolled in the unit(s) of study. All supporting documentation must be submitted with the application.

Assessment of Applications

(29) Special circumstances apply where the circumstances:

- a. are beyond the student's control; and
- b. do not make their full impact on the student for the unit of study:
 - i. on or after the census date for the unit of study in question for domestic students;
 - ii. until critical dates for international students have passed as outlined in clause (16) and (17). (The critical dates for international students can be accessed on the following website ; and
- c. make it impracticable for the student to complete the requirements for the unit during the period during which the student undertook, or was to undertake, the unit.

(30) The Assessor will be satisfied that a student's circumstances are beyond that student's control if:

- a. A situation occurs 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.
- b. This situation must be unusual, uncommon or abnormal.

(31) In all cases where a full fee paying student submits an Application for Remission or Refund of Fees after Census Date Due to Special Circumstances, the Assessor will be satisfied that the student's circumstances did not make their full impact on the student until on or after the census date (or critical dates for international students) for a unit of study if the student's circumstances occur:

- a. before the census date (or critical dates for international students), but worsen after that day; or
- b. before the census date (or critical dates for international students), but the full effect or magnitude does not become apparent until on or after that day; or
- c. on or after the census date (or critical dates for international students).

Application Outcomes

(32) Student Services will advise the student in writing of the outcome of their application, normally within 6 weeks of receipt of the application. The notice of decision will state:

- a. the reasons for the decision
- b. the right of review
- c. an outline of the review process

Review of Decision

(33) If a student is not satisfied with the outcome of their application they may request a review within 4 weeks of

receipt of notification.

(34) The request for review must be in writing and should:

- a. Contain information and/or documentation additional to that included in the original application
- b. directly address the reasons provided for the original decision [see clause (32) - Application Outcomes].

(35) Within 4 weeks of receipt of the review request, Student Services will advise the student in writing of the outcome of their review request. The notification will state:

- a. the reasons for the review outcome
- b. the right of appeal
- c. an outline of the appeal process

(36) If a student wishes to dispute the reviewed outcome they may apply to the Administrative Appeals Tribunal for a further review.

Successful Applications and Refunds

(37) If the request is successful, Student Services will authorise a refund of tuition fees to a maximum of \$10,000. Refunds in excess of \$10,000 will be referred to the Vice Chancellor, Senior Deputy Vice Chancellor or Executive Director, Corporate Services for authorisation.

(38) Refunds will be made only to the student who submitted the application.

(39) In the case of onshore international students, where a refund is payable under this Policy due to student default the University will pay the student the amount within the time limits prescribed by the [ESOS Act](#) and after receiving a written claim from the student. In the case of Provider Default the payment period will be 2 weeks. In the case of Student Default the payment period will be 4 weeks.

(40) A 'withdrawal without failure', if not previously approved, will be recorded against the relevant units.

(41) The effective date for determination of eligibility for a refund is the date written advice is received by the Director, Student Experience Team. Advice of withdrawal from a unit or course or request for a refund given to your lecturer or School is not sufficient.

Unsuccessful Applications

(42) If an application for refund is unsuccessful and a fail grade has been recorded against the unit(s) in which a refund is requested, the student may be eligible to apply for "withdrawal without failure". Such an application must be in accordance with Rule 2, clause (49)a and b, which allows a student to apply to the Head of School responsible for the unit (or the relevant Pro Vice Chancellor for units older than 12 months). The application must be made in writing to the Head of School within 12 calendar months of the last day of the study period to which the enrolment relates. The Head of School may approve a notation of "withdrawn" to be recorded against the relevant unit on the student's academic record. A "withdrawn without failure" authorisation from the Head of School does not reduce the student's financial liability for the unit.

Status and Details

Status	Historic
Effective Date	14th August 2012
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Head of Work Unit	Fiona Wright Director, Student Administration Services
Enquiries Contact	Student Administration Services