Policy Document Administrator	Registrar registrar@aut.edu.au (02) 9262 7890
Policy Document Approver	Academic Board
Responsible Body/Person	Academic Board
Next Review date	October 2028
Superseded documents	*FEE-HELP Re-Crediting policy*
Related documents	Unit Enrolment and Results Policy Coursework Course Enrolment Policy HDR Course Enrolment Policy *Support for Students Policy*
Related HE Standards	1.1.2
Related National Code Standards	3

1. PURPOSE

To outline a student's rights to apply for a refund of tuition fees of a unit enrolment which has not been successfully completed.

2. DEFINITIONS

Definitions for any words in **Bold** in this document can be found in the Policy Glossary. The first instance of each defined term has been outlined in bold.

3. SCOPE

This policy applies to students who enrolled in a **unit**(s) of study and have not successfully completed that unit(s), who have been unable to complete the unit(s) of study due to special circumstances.

4. POLICY STATEMENT

A **student** who had enrolled in a unit of study may apply after the **census date** to have their **tuition fees** refunded (**up-front paying students**) or their **FEE-HELP** balance re-credited (FEE-HELP students) if the student has been unable to complete the requirements of a unit of study and the student believes that this was due to special circumstances. Where a refund of up-front paid tuition fees is granted, the amount of tuition fees paid for the unit(s) by the student or other party will be refunded. Where a refund of a FEE-HELP student is granted, a student's FEE-HELP debt for the unit(s) will be removed from the student's records with the Australian Taxation Office and any up-front payment is refunded.

5. POLICY APPLICATION

General

4.1 A student can apply to the AUT to have their tuition fees refunded if he or she withdraws from a unit of study after the census date and/or the student has not completed the requirements for the unit of study, and believes that this was due to special circumstances. The student must apply in writing, within twelve (12) months of the withdrawal date, or if the student has not withdrawn, within twelve (12) months of the end of the period of study in which the unit of study was or was to be undertaken. The AUT can exercise its discretion to waive this requirement if it is satisfied that the application could not be made within the time limit.

AUT's Tuition Fee Refund Officer will consider the student's application within 28 days of receiving the student's written application.

The current Tuition Fee Refund Officer is:

Director of Academic Services
Australian College of Theology
Level 5
33 York Street
Sydney NSW 2000
ph. (02) 9262 7890
email: agunarathne@aut.edu.au

Refund / re-credit rules

4.2 The AUT will refund a student's tuition fees / re-credit a student's FEE-HELP balance if it is satisfied that special circumstances apply to the student. Special circumstances are deemed to be those circumstances which meet all of the following criteria:

- the circumstances are beyond the student's control;
- the circumstances do not make their full impact on the student until on, or after, the census date; and
- the circumstances make it impracticable for the student to complete the requirements for the unit during the period in which the student undertook, or was to undertake the unit.

4.3 The AUT will be satisfied that the student's circumstances are beyond the student's control if a situation occurs which a reasonable student 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.

4.4 The AUT will be satisfied that a student's circumstances did not make their full impact until on or after the census date for the unit of study if the student's circumstances occur:

(a) before the census date, but worsen after that day; or

(b) before the census date, but the full effect or magnitude does not become apparent until on or after that day; or

(c) on or after the census date.

4.5 Special circumstances would make it impracticable for the student to complete the requirements for the unit of study would include:

(a) medical circumstances (i.e. illness, injury); or

(b) family /personal circumstances (i.e. family illness, carer responsibilities); or

(c) employment related circumstances (i.e. increase in hours, relocation); or

(d) bereavement.

4.6 Each application will be examined and determined on its merits. The Tuition Fee Refund Officer will consider a student's claims, together with independent supporting documentary evidence that substantiates these claims. The Tuition Fee Refund Officer will consult the applicant's college when determining the merits of any tuition fee refund application.

The Tuition Fee Refund Officer will notify the student of the decision and the reasons for making the decision. The Officer will advise the applicant of their rights for a review of the decision if the applicant is unsatisfied with the outcome.

If the decision is made to refund the tuition fee of an up-front paying student, the AUT will refund all tuition fees paid to a nominated bank account. If the decision is made to refund the tuition fee of a FEE-HELP student, refunds of any up-front payment will be made in the same manner. In addition, the AUT will notify the Department of Education, and will repay to the Commonwealth any FEE-HELP assistance received from it on the student's behalf, in order to re-credit the student's FEE-HELP balance. The Department of Education will inform the Australian Taxation Office that the debit has been removed.

Refunds (and FEE-HELP remissions) for successful applicants will be coordinated by the AUT Office, for the full tuition fee paid for the relevant unit(s) of study. The proportion of tuition fees held by an **Affiliated College** will be reconciled with the relevant college by the AUT's finance staff, but this process will not delay the student's tuition fee refund.

Student Support

4.7 Students who lodge a Tuition Fee Refund application will be assessed by the Tuition Fee Refund Officer for the need for a Support Plan, in line with the requirements of the *Support for Students Policy*. In the assessment of a Tuition Fee Refund application, regardless of the outcome of the Tuition Fee Refund application, the University may consider that the student is at risk of unsuccessful progress in subsequent units of study, based on the circumstances applicable to the case. Where this is the case, the University may impose a requirement that the student be placed on a Support Plan prior to further studies being undertaken. Further information on Support Plans is available in the *Support for Students Policy*.

Appeals

4.8 Where a student is not satisfied with the decision made by the Tuition Fee Refund Officer, they may apply in writing for a review of the decision. The Review Officer is the Vice-Chancellor of the AUT. The time limit for applying for a review of the decision is 28 days from the student receiving notice of the decision. The student must state the reasons why he or she is applying for a review. The Review Officer will notify the applicant of his decision and the reasons for making the decision. The Review Officer is:

Vice-Chancellor
Australian University of Theology
Level 5
33 York Street
Sydney NSW 2000
ph. (02) 9262 7890
email: vc@aut.edu.au

The Review Officer's available options are to:

1. confirm the decision;
2. vary the decision; or
3. set the decision aside and substitute a new decision.

If the student was a FEE-HELP student, the Review Officer will advise the applicant of his or her right to appeal to the Administrative Review Tribunal (ART) for a review of the Reviewer's decision if the applicant is unsatisfied with the outcome and will provide the applicant with the contact details and address of the nearest ART registry.

The Review Officer must acknowledge receipt of an application for a review of a decision in writing and will inform the applicant that, if the Reviewer has not advised the applicant of a decision within 45 days of receiving the application for review, the Reviewer is taken to have confirmed the original decision.

Where a student is not satisfied with the reviewed decision made by the Review Officer, they may apply to the ART for a further review of the decision not to re-credit a student's FEE-HELP balance. The student may supply additional information to the ART that he or she did not previously supply to the AUT (including the Review Officer).

6. RELATED DOCUMENTS AND LEGISLATION

Study Assist https://www.studyassist.gov.au/ – information for students about government assistance for financing tertiary study.

Higher Education Support Act 2003

Higher Education Standards Framework (Threshold Standards) 2021

7. VERSION HISTORY

Version	Approved by	Approval Date	Effective Date	Changes made
1.1	N/A	19 November 2019	19 November 2019	Updated postal address, removed office-holder names of relevant ACT staff.
1.2	Academic Board	22 October 2021	22 October 2021	No changes; policy review
1.3	Academic Board	4 August 2023	4 August 2023	Policy review; minor editorial updates

2	Vice-Chancellor	April 2025	April 2025	University template, minor editorial updates
3	Academic Board	October 2025	October 2025	Policy review; minor updates; incorporated that students who submit a TFR application will be assessed for the need for a support plan

Any hard copy of this electronic document may not be current as the University regularly reviews its policies. The latest version can be found online at aut.edu.au/documents