

## VET Student Loans – FAQs (Frequently Asked Questions)

### What is a VET Student Loan?

The VET Student Loans program is the Commonwealth Government loan scheme for vocational education and training (VET). Under this program, eligible students studying in approved Diplomas or Advanced Diplomas can pay their tuition fees through a student loan. The loan is repaid via the Australian tax system when the minimum income threshold for repayment has been reached. There is a loan fee of 20% for full fee-paying students. Based on a loan fee of 20% applies to VET Student loans, the VSL (VET Student Loan) debt a student may incur if the student receives the maximum VSL amount is \$108,596.40.

### Am I eligible?

To be eligible, you must either:

- be an Australian citizen, or
- a permanent humanitarian visa holder, who is usually resident in Australia, or
- a Pacific Engagement visa holder, who is usually resident in Australia (census dates after 1 February 2024)
- be a New Zealand citizen on Special Category Visa (SCV subclass 444) who grew up here. Holders of other permanent visas and temporary visas are NOT eligible for a VET Student Loan. You must also:
  - have a tax file number or be applying for one (the personal details of your TFN with the ATO (Australian Tax Office), must match the personal details you have provided to Airwork Aviation, for example your name and date of birth)
  - have a Unique Student Identifier (USI)
  - intend to undertake your course primarily in Australia
  - be assessed as academically suitable to undertake a high-level vocational qualification.
  - have not exceeded your lifetime Commonwealth student loan limit.

### What are New Zealand Citizen Eligibility criteria?

New Zealand citizens who hold a Special Category Visa (SCV Subclass 444) and meet the residency criteria are eligible to apply for a loan. The residency requirements are:

1. holds a special visa category, such as the New Zealand Special Category Visa (SCV)
2. has been usually resident in Australia for at least 10 years
3. was a dependent child when he or she was first usually resident in Australia
4. has been in Australia for periods totalling 8 years during the previous 10 years and
5. has been in Australia for periods totalling 18 months during the previous 2 years.

You will need to provide evidence to Airwork Aviation of your eligibility before requesting a loan

## How will my course fees be charged?

Fees for courses eligible for VET Student Loans are charged by Units of Study (UoS). Your course will have 3 Units of Study, with your payments spread across the duration of your course. Each Unit of Study has a census day, set at no less than 20% into the Unit of Study. You will be sent a VET Student Loan Fee Notice to your personal email address 14 days before each census day, indicating your fees and census days. Your debt is incurred on the day after the census day. After a census day has passed, Airwork Aviation will send you a Commonwealth Assistance Notice (CAN) for that Unit of Study. The CAN will provide you with information about your debt, including the loan fee if applicable. If you believe your CAN is incorrect, you should contact Airwork Aviation immediately.

## How do I apply for a VET Student Loan?

A VET Student Loan is an agreement between you and the Commonwealth Government. You apply for a loan through the Commonwealth's Electronic Commonwealth Assistance Form (eCAF). If you have been accepted into your course, met all the loan eligibility and academic suitability requirements (including providing any required evidence) and wish to apply for a loan, we will advise the Commonwealth Government. They will send you an email with a passkey to access the eCAF system. You must complete the online application before the first census day of your course, otherwise you are not eligible for a loan for that Unit of Study and will need to pay. For more information visit the Commonwealth Government website. Your loan application is separate to your enrolment with Airwork Aviation. The Commonwealth Government requires that there is a two-day cooling off period between when you first enrol with Airwork Aviation and when you apply for a VET Student Loan. When you complete the eCAF process your enrolment can then be finalised.

## When do I Pay my Debt?

You repay your loan through the tax system when your income is above the minimum repayment threshold. Repayment thresholds are adjusted each year to reflect changes in average weekly earnings. The minimum repayment income threshold for 2024-25 is \$54,435. This means that once your income reaches the minimum threshold you will need to start repaying your loan through the Australian Tax Office. For more information regarding Commonwealth loan repayment thresholds, please visit the [Study Assist](#) website.

## Will taking out a loan impact my credit rating?

A VET Student Loan is a personal debt obligation that can affect your credit rating. It may also have wage and tax repayment implications. You should seek independent financial advice before applying for a VET Student Loan.

## I have a student debt already; how do I confirm my total debt?

Log into the [myHELPbalance](#) portal to check your available HELP (Higher Education Loan Program) balance. You will need your Commonwealth Higher Education Student Support Number (CHESSN) to log in.

## What is a CHESSN?

A CHESSN was allocated to all students as a primary student identifier when they first accessed a Commonwealth Loan prior to 2021. For new students (from 2021), the CHESSN has been replaced by the USI and will be the primary student identifier moving forward.

## What is a USI?

A USI is a Unique Student Identifier. The Commonwealth Government requires all students who are studying in a nationally recognised training course to have a USI. If you already have one, please ensure you use the same USI when you enrol for any training. If you don't have a USI, you can go to <https://www.usi.gov.au/> to register before you apply to enrol.

## What happens to my debt if I move overseas?

From the 1 July 2017, any HELP debtors (students who have received a Commonwealth Government student loan) who move overseas are required to make compulsory HELP repayments. This also applies to any existing HELP debts. The first step is to notify the ATO before you travel, or within 7 days of leaving Australia, if you intend to move overseas for 183 days (around 6 months) or more in any 12-month period. For more information on how to register with the ATO, visit the [Study Assist](#) website.

## Can I make a payment?

If all your census days have passed, you can make payments direct to the Australian Taxation Office (ATO).

## Is there a limit to how much I can borrow?

From 1 January 2017, the Commonwealth Government has set a course loan cap for each course. The loan cap is the total amount the student can borrow for the course. Course loan caps for Airwork Aviation Approved Courses for 2025 is \$94,207.00. There is also a lifetime loan limit per student. This is the total amount you can incur in your lifetime under any Commonwealth HELP student loan scheme – whether it is Higher Education FEE-HELP, VET FEE-HELP or a VET Student Loan. It is indexed each year, in line with the Consumer Price Index (CPI). In 2025, the lifetime loan limit for Aviation courses is \$182,172 for most students. Students can check their HELP balance and loan obligations by logging into [myHELPbalance](#). You will need your Commonwealth Higher Education Student Support Number (CHESSN) or Unique Student Identifier (USI) to log in. Please note, your HELP balance is renewable. Any compulsory or voluntary repayments starting from the 2019-20 income year will top up your HELP balance. These repayments will be applied to your HELP balance from 1 July 2020 onwards, after you have submitted your tax return to the ATO. Repayments can be re-borrowed in the future, up to the current HELP loan limit.

## What if I want to withdraw from my study?

You must withdraw in writing to Airwork Aviation. The loan amount you incur will depend on the timing of your withdrawal. There are no penalties if you withdraw on or before the census day. However, once a census day has passed, the loan amount for the unit of study is incurred. If you withdraw from a unit after the census day because you become seriously ill or for other exceptional circumstances, you can apply to Airwork Aviation to have your HELP balance re-credited and your VETSL debt removed.

You cannot have your debt removed if you have already successfully completed your unit of study.