

Domestic Learner Tuition Fee Refund Policy and Procedure

1. Purpose and Scope

This policy and procedure details AIE's framework for actioning learner applications for refund and issuing tuition fee refunds where applicable to learners who have paid monies to AIE studies.

Tuition fee refunds may result from learner withdrawal, learner cancellation prior to course commencement, course cancellation by AIE, or default by AIE or the learner.

This policy and procedure ensures AIE meets its obligations in accordance with the requirements of the Standards for RTOs 2015.

This policy is relevant to domestic learners who have paid tuition fees for Certificate, Diploma, Advanced Diploma and Graduate Diploma courses. It also applies to domestic learners who have paid course fees for non-accredited short courses (holiday programs/beginner courses).

This policy does not remove the consumer rights of learners to take further action under Australian Consumer Law or to pursue other legal remedies.

This policy and procedure applies to AIE administration, AIE accounts and AIE executive staff who have direct oversight of the learner tuition fee refund process.

2. The Policy

AIE implements a consistent, reliable and structured approach to the review of learner applications for tuition fee refunds, and the payment of refunds where deemed appropriate, to protect the rights and interests of learners.

AIE ensures that its tuition fee refund processes meet the requirements of the Standards for RTOs 2015.

3. Implementation

The CEO is responsible for the approval of this policy after it has been drafted and reviewed by the National Compliance Officer.

The policy is to be implemented via induction and training of staff and distribution via the AIE Intranet and other publications as required.

4. Procedure/s

4.1. General

4.1.1. Tuition Fee Protection

AIE collects learner tuition fees from learners in advance in excess of \$1500 in some instances.

AIE complies with current requirements for pre-paid tuition fee protection as set out by the Standards for RTOs 2015.

4.1.2. AIE Course Cancellation

AIE reserves the right to cancel any course if insufficient enrolments are received or if circumstances beyond AIE's control require it.

Where AIE is unable to provide the services that have been paid for, AIE will:

- a. Transfer students into an equivalent course without having to pay any additional fees for the portion of the course they have paid in advance; or
- b. Provide learners with a full refund of any tuition fees paid to date by the learner.

AIE will process the refund within 28 days of the course cancellation date.

4.2. Domestic Learners – Diploma, Advanced Diploma or Graduate Diploma

4.2.1. Withdrawal

Learners who are considering withdrawing from their course are encouraged to speak to their trainers or Head of School in the first instance.

A learner who decides to proceed with a course or Unit of Study withdrawal may do so at any time in writing by completing a Withdrawal Form. AIE will process the withdrawal as at the date noted on the withdrawal form.

AIE does not consider non-attendance as automatic withdrawal. Refer to the *Learner Progress Policy and Procedure* and *Cancellation of Learner Enrolment Policy and Procedure*.

AIE will advise learners of the critical dates, particularly census dates, that relate to their course and the impact of these on the learner's eligibility for a fee refund.

4.2.2. Tuition Fee Refunds

AIE will provide a learner a tuition fee refund of payments made (relevant to the Unit/s of Study) if they withdraw from their course or Unit of Study in the following circumstances:

- a. The learner withdraws on or before the census date of their course or relevant Unit/s of study

- b. The learner withdraws after the census date of their course or relevant Unit/s of Study and successfully applies for a refund/remission of fees due to special circumstances, supported by appropriate and approved documentary evidence.

Refer to following section on Withdrawal under Special Circumstances for further information.

4.2.3. Withdrawal Under Special Circumstances

AIE may at its discretion take into consideration special circumstances that may affect learner refunds relating to withdrawal.

AIE deems circumstances to be special if they:

- a. Are beyond the learner's control
- b. Do not make their full impact on the learner until after the census date
- c. Make it impracticable for the learner to complete the requirements of the Unit of Study they are enrolled in.

AIE will consider if the learner could:

- d. Complete their study online
- e. Complete any assessments or demonstrate any competencies required
- f. Achieve course requirements through other methods or arrangements.

AIE may also consider any of the following:

- g. The learner's medical circumstances (as evidenced by medical certificate/s or other information from an appropriate medical practitioner)
- h. Circumstances relating to the learner or their family that make it impractical to complete their course requirements.

The Head of School will review a learner's application for refund/remission of fees due to special circumstances as per the process detailed in the *VETSL Special Circumstances Review Policy and Procedure*.

The Head of School will make their recommendation to the CEO if special circumstances are to be substantiated and fee refund/remission granted. The CEO will provide written approval (email is sufficient) of fee refund/remission.

The Head of School will advise the learner of the outcome within 30 days of the application being received.

Learners have the right to appeal any decision as per the Complaints and Appeals process.

4.2.4. Payment of Refunds

AIE will pay any monies to be refunded to the learner directly to the bank account nominated by the learner. Cash refunds are not permitted.

AIE will pay refunds within 14 days of being notified of the learner's bank account.

4.3. Domestic Learners – Certificates

4.3.1. Withdrawals

AIE has appropriate safeguards in place to protect any monies paid in advance for a Certificate course/s and to ensure these funds are not recorded as income until the relevant course/s have commenced.

A learner who wishes to withdraw from a Certificate course must do so in writing (email is sufficient) prior to the starting date of the course. A learner who wishes to withdraw from a Certificate course after they have commenced the course must submit a Withdrawal Form to their campus Administration.

4.3.2. Tuition Fee Refunds

AIE will provide tuition course fee refunds as follows:

Number of Days' Notice	Refund
More than 10 working days before the course starts	Full refund of all fees paid – less non-refundable enrolment fee
Less than 5 working days before the course starts	90% refund of any fees paid – less non-refundable enrolment fee
Within 8 delivery hours after starting the course	80% refund of any fees paid – less non-refundable enrolment fee
More than 8 delivery hours after starting the course	No refund of any fees paid

4.3.3. Deferment

In certain circumstances AIE may provide learners with a pro-rata credit in lieu of a refund if they are unable to continue with a certificate course they have commenced for unavoidable reasons, such as significant illness. Learners may use the credit to pay for the same course at a future date.

The credit cannot be transferred to another course or to another person.

Learners are required to advise their campus Administration in writing (email is sufficient) of their circumstances and request for deferment. Approval must be obtained from the Head of School.

4.3.4. Payment of Refunds

AIE will pay any monies to be refunded to the learner directly to the bank account nominated by the learner. Cash refunds are not permitted.

4.4. Domestic Learners – Non-accredited Short Courses (Beginner Courses/Holiday Courses)

4.4.1. Cancellations and Withdrawals

A learner who wishes to cancel their application for a non-accredited short course must do so in writing to their campus Administration (email is sufficient) prior to the starting date of the course.

A learner who does not wish to continue with a non-accredited short course after the course has started must advise AIE in writing (email is sufficient).

4.4.2. Course Fee Refunds

AIE will provide course fee refunds as follows:

Number of Days' Notice	Refund
Anytime prior course starting date	Full refund of any fees paid
After course commencement	No refund of any fees paid

HOSs may, at their discretion, approve a partial course fee refund or credit note.

4.4.3. Payment of Refunds

AIE will pay any monies to be refunded to the learner directly to the bank account nominated by the learner. Cash refunds are not permitted.

5. Definitions

The following definitions apply to this policy:

Term	Definition
Agreed Start Date of Course	The date on which a course was scheduled to start, advised to the learner in writing.
Census Date	The last day that a learner can withdraw their enrolment without incurring the tuition fee debt for that Unit of Study.
Tuition Fees	The amount specified by AIE as the course fee for a particular course. Tuition fees do not include monies paid for third party services, consumables, application fees, etc.
Tuition Protection Service (TPS)	The Australian Government initiative to protect domestic and international learners in the event that their education provider is unable to fully deliver their course of study. The TPS ensures that learners are able to either complete their studies in another course or with another education provider or receive a refund of their unspent tuition fees.
Unit/s of Study	The fee period/s within a Diploma, Advanced Diploma or Graduate Diploma qualification.
Withdrawal Form	The authorised form by which learners must advise AIE of their intention to withdraw from the course they have applied for or enrolled in either prior to or after course commencement. The completed and signed form must be submitted to the learner's campus Administration.

6. Related Documents

The following internal documents are related to this policy:

- a. Cancellation of Learner Enrolment Policy and Procedure.
- b. Learner Privacy Policy and Procedure
- c. Learner Progress Policy and Procedure
- d. Learner Withdrawal Policy and Procedure
- e. Tuition Fee Payment and Debt Collection Policy and Procedure
- f. VETSL Special Circumstances Review Policy and Procedure
- g. Withdrawal Form

The following legislation and standards are related to this policy:

- h. Standards for Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) 2015.

7. Review

This policy will be reviewed annually by the National Compliance Manager.

8. Revision History

This policy has undergone the following revisions:

Version No.	Version Description	Contributor(s)	Approval Authority	Date Revised/ Approved
1.0	Policy created, approved by Board of Directors and published.	Linda Burrows (National Compliance Officer) Alexandra Mannell (Head of School, Sydney) Vicki De Margheriti (Chief Executive Officer)	BOD	25 April 2021
1.1	Minor amendments; style/formatting update.	Charlotte Pichelmann (Assistant National Compliance Officer) Nick Markesinis (Intranet Content Coordinator)	-	17 October 2022

Appendix A: Tuition Fee Refund Table – Domestic Learners (Figures as at October 2020)

Situation	Timeframe	Refund Applicable	Documentation Required
General			
AIE course cancellation	At any time	Full refund of all tuition fees paid to date	Written advice from AIE
AIE default	At any time	Transfer to an acceptable alternative course OR Full refund of unspent tuition fees paid to date	Written advice from AIE
Diploma, Advanced Diploma and Graduate Diploma			
Withdrawal	On or prior to the census date for the relevant Unit/s of Study	Full refund of all tuition fees paid to date relevant to the withdrawn Unit/s of Study	Withdrawal form
Withdrawal seeking fee remission due to Special Circumstances	After the census date for the relevant Unit/s of Study	If Special Circumstances are substantiated – Full refund of all tuition fees paid to date relevant to the withdrawn Unit/s of Study	Withdrawal form Appropriate, approved documentary evidence
Certificates			
Withdrawal	More than 10 working days before the course starts	Full refund of all tuition fees paid – less non-refundable enrolment fee of \$65.00	Withdrawal form
Withdrawal	Less than 5 working days before the course starts	90% refund of any tuition fees paid – less non-refundable enrolment fee of \$65.00	Withdrawal form
Withdrawal	Within 8 delivery hours after starting the course	80% refund of any tuition fees paid – less non-refundable enrolment fee of \$65.00	Withdrawal form
Withdrawal	More than 8 delivery hours after starting the course	No refund of any fees paid	Withdrawal form
Deferment	More than 8 delivery hours after starting the course	Pro rata course credit	Email
Non-accredited Short Courses (Beginner Courses/Holiday Courses)			
Cancellation	Anytime prior to course starting date	Full refund of all fees paid	Email
Cancellation	After course commencement	No refund	Email