VET FEE-HELP Policy

1. PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to outline how Holmesglen manages VET FEE-HELP re-credit applications arising from enrolments under the discontinued VET FEE-HELP scheme and any appeal against Holmesglen decisions regarding such an application. This policy applies solely to VET FEE-HELP re-credit matters and does not extend to any other re-credit, remission, or refund processes at Holmesglen.

2. SCOPE

Applies to VET FEE-HELP re-credit applications and appeals against any re-credit application decision.

3. POLICY STATEMENT

The VET FEE-HELP program was an Australian Government loan scheme that operated from 2008 to 2016. It allowed eligible students to defer VET tuition fees and repay them later, through the Australian Taxation Office, when their income reached a certain threshold.

Throughout the operation of the VET FEE-HELP scheme, students retained access to established review and re-credit processes that enabled providers to consider requests based on special circumstances and other eligible grounds.

In 2019 the government introduced the VET FEE-HELP Student Redress Measures, and debts could be re-credited through this scheme until 31 December 2023. The Student Redress Measures scheme has been discontinued, and students must now contact providers directly to apply for any VET FEE-HELP re-credits.

This policy outlines how Holmesglen will deal with such applications or appeals against any decisions made about such applications.

4. PRINCIPLES

General principles

4.1 Applicants must submit their re-credit request by using the prescribed form, by email, to complaints@holmesglen.edu.au.

4.2 Applications should include independent third-party evidence to support the application, including documentation to show when the applicant became aware of the debt.

4.3 An application may be considered invalid if:

a) The prescribed form is incomplete or not properly submitted.

b) The applicant has not attached proof of when they found out about the debt.

c) The applicant has provided only supplementary evidence such as a statutory declaration or personal statement, without any independent third-party documentation to support their application.

4.4 If an application is assessed as invalid, the applicant will be notified in writing and will be given 30 calendar days to make their application valid.

4.5 If the applicant does not make their application valid within 30 calendar days, the application will be dismissed. The applicant may request an extension to this time period and must supply reasonable evidence as to why they need this extension. Holmesglen may approve or not approve such an extension, at its discretion.

4.6 If an application is dismissed because it is not valid, then the applicant may not re-submit another application for the same debt.

4.7 Applications for re-credit will only be considered if the applicant did not attend, participate in, or complete any part of the relevant course.

4.8 Where an applicant has attended classes, accessed learning materials, submitted assessments, or otherwise participated in the course, Holmesglen may determine that the applicant has engaged sufficiently with the course and is therefore not eligible for re-credit consideration under this policy.

4.9 Holmesglen will take responsibility for reviewing all relevant student records to confirm whether an applicant attended, participated in or completed any part of the course.

4.10 An applicant may, at any stage of the process, seek the assistance of an appropriate support person.

4.11 Applications submitted by a person acting on behalf of the applicant may be accepted or not accepted at Holmesglen's discretion, taking into account the individual circumstances.

4.12 If an applicant is seeking re-credit on the basis of special circumstances, then the applicant must demonstrate that the circumstances were beyond their control.

4.13 An applicant must also demonstrate that either:

a) It could not have been known before the census date that the circumstances would occur.

b) The circumstances did not make their full impact known until on or after the census date.

4.14 An applicant must demonstrate that the circumstances made it impractical for them to complete the requirements of the course.

4.15 An applicant must demonstrate that the circumstances did not occur either as a direct or indirect consequence of their own actions or failure to act.

4.16 Applicants must provide independent, third-party evidence of special circumstances to support their application.

4.17 Acceptable evidence of special circumstances includes (but is not limited to):

a) Medical evidence such as letters or reports from doctors, specialists, psychiatrists or other registered health practitioners.

b) Official documentation from third parties including police, lawyers, social workers or other government agencies.

4.18 The evidence must clearly outline the nature, timing and impact of the circumstances.

4.19 Applicants may submit a statutory declaration or personal statement as part of their application for consideration on the basis of special circumstances. However, these documents will be considered as supplementary evidence only. While they may provide useful context, they will not, on their own, constitute a strong evidential basis for determining whether special circumstances existed.

Review of applications

4.20 Valid applications will be assessed on their own merits by a panel, who will prepare a written report to the Chief Executive Officer (**CEO**).

4.21 The Lead Investigator Student Complaints, or in their absence the Executive Director Student Engagement and Support will convene the panel and is responsible for ensuring that the panel operates in accordance with this policy.

4.22 The panel must consist of at least three people. The composition must include:

a) Convener (either Lead Investigator or Executive Director in accordance with s4.21)

b) At least two additional members selected from the following areas:

(i) The Office of the Registrar

(ii) A senior member of a faculty that is not connected with the application

(iii) Holmesglen Executive Team.

4.23 Holmesglen aims to have valid applications considered by the panel within 90 calendar days of receipt of such valid application. However, complex matters or requests for additional information may result in longer timelines.

4.24 Applicants may be asked to provide further information by the panel. And if this occurs, the applicant will be given 30 calendar days to provide such further information. If the applicant fails to provide the further information within this timeframe, then Holmesglen may dismiss the application. The applicant may request an extension to this time period and must supply reasonable evidence as to why they need this extension. Holmesglen may approve or not approve such an extension, at its discretion.

4.25 If an application is dismissed at this stage, then the applicant may not re-submit an application for the same debt.

Final decision letter

4.26 The CEO will issue a letter to the applicant to advise of the decision. The letter will:

a) State the outcome of the application.
b) Provide detailed reasons for the decision, including references to the specific evidence provided by the applicant.
c) Advise the applicant of their right to appeal.
d) Be issued as soon as practicable after the CEO receives the written report from the review panel, usually within 30 calendar days.

4.27 If an application for re-credit is approved, Holmesglen will complete all actions that it is responsible to carry out within seven calendar days of the letter being issued.

Appeals of VET FEE-HELP decisions

4.28 Appeals of VET FEE-HELP re-credit decisions will be managed only in accordance with the following sections of this policy. The Holmesglen Appeals Policy (Learners) does not apply to these matters.

4.29 Applicants who wish to appeal a VET FEE-HELP re-credit decision must do so within 30 calendar days of the CEO's letter being issued. Appeals must be in writing, by email, to complaints@holmesglen.edu.au.

4.30 By submitting an appeal in writing, the applicant confirms that they have read and understood this policy, and they acknowledge that the outcome of the appeal may be less favourable than the original decision.

4.31 The appeal email must clearly state the grounds upon which the applicant is appealing.

4.32 Acceptable grounds for appeal are:

a) There is new evidence that was not available at the time of the panel meeting, and it would likely have affected the decision.
b) There is evidence that this policy was not correctly followed during the original application and decision process.
c) There is evidence of some other procedural irregularity, unfairness or conflict of interest that is likely to have affected the decision.

4.33 Appellants must provide independent supporting evidence to substantiate their grounds for appeal. A personal statement expressing feelings or opinions or dissatisfaction is not sufficient evidence to support an appeal.

4.34 The VET FEE-HELP re-credit appeal process is limited to reviewing whether the decision was made fairly and in accordance with this policy. It is not an opportunity to re-examine the entire matter unless the appellant provides new evidence that was not available at the time of the panel meeting, in which case a member of the Executive will re-consider the entire matter and issue an outcome.

4.35 Appeals submitted under this policy will be reviewed by a member of the Holmesglen Executive.

4.36 Following their review, that Executive will issue a written decision letter to the applicant which will:

a) Advise whether the appeal was assessed as valid or invalid (and therefore dismissed).
b) Advise whether the original decision has been upheld or overturned.
c) Advise of the next steps available to the applicant if they are dissatisfied with the Executive's decision.

4.37 Appeal outcomes will be issued as soon as practicable, usually within 60 calendar days of an appeal being received.

4.38 The Executive reviewer's decision is the final outcome and all Holmesglen processes for the VET FEE-HELP re-credit application would have been exhausted at that point.

4.39 An appellant may, at any stage of the process, seek the assistance of an appropriate support person.

4.40 Applications submitted by a person acting on behalf of the applicant may be accepted or not accepted at Holmesglen's discretion, taking into account the individual circumstances.

5. ACCOUNTABILITIES

Action	Accountability
▪ Oversee the implementation, monitoring and reporting requirements of this policy. ▪ Report to the Board on any potential risk to the Institute's reputation or compliance with regulatory requirements and the actions taken in response.	Chief Executive
▪ Establish procedures, training and resources to ensure effective implementation of this policy. ▪ Ensure records are kept securely.	Executive Director, Engagement and Support
▪ Receive written recommendations from the review panel. ▪ Issue a letter to the applicant, in accordance with s4.26 of this policy.	Chief Executive
▪ Receive appeal and associated documents. ▪ Review the original decision in accordance with this policy. ▪ Issue a letter to the applicant, in accordance with s4.36 of this policy.	Holmesglen Executive (appeal reviewer)
▪ Receive re-credit applications by email. ▪ Review whether the application form is properly completed (and support the applicant to complete it if needed). ▪ Prepare the application and evidence for the review panel. ▪ Schedule the review panel meeting. ▪ Receive appeal applications by email. ▪ Nominate a Holmesglen Executive appeal reviewer. ▪ Provide all documents related to the original re-credit and the appeal to that Executive reviewer. ▪ Maintain records of re-credit applications, appeals and outcomes.	Lead Investigator – Student Complaints and Appeals Student Complaints and Appeals Officer
▪ Meet on an ad-hoc basis to review re-credit applications. ▪ Provide a written report to the Chief Executive.	Review Panel

Action	Accountability
▪ Perform periodic quality audits on VET FEE-HELP re-credit applications and appeals to ensure compliance and report findings.	Manager, Internal Audit or Executive Officer, Quality and Educational Compliance

6. DEFINITIONS

Term	Meaning
Appeal	A process to seek reconsideration of the CFO decision on a VET FEE-HELP re-credit application.
Appellant	Person lodging an appeal.
Applicant	Person making a VET FEE-HELP re-credit application.
Procedural fairness	Is present when: ▪ The applicant or appellant has been given reasonable opportunity to make their application or appeal valid. ▪ The application or appeal has been considered fairly by a person for whom there exists no conflict of interest. ▪ The application or appeal has been handled in accordance with this policy.
Support person	A person who assists the applicant or appellant during any stage of the VET FEE-HELP re-credit application or appeal process. This may be a friend, family member, colleague, health professional or other appropriate adult. The support person must not have a conflict of interest in relation to the matter.

7. CONTEXT AND/OR REFERENCED DOCUMENTS

Internal

Complaints Policy (Learners)

Appeals Policy (Learners)

External

Higher Education Support Act 2003 (Cth)

Ombudsman Act 1973 (Vic)

8. REVIEW

8.1 This policy must be reviewed no later than three years from the date of approval.

8.2 The policy will remain in force until such time as it has been reviewed and re-approved or rescinded. The policy may be withdrawn or amended as part of continuous improvement prior to the scheduled review date.

9. VERSION HISTORY

Version number	Date	Summary of changes
1	October 19, 2026	New policy to provide Holmesglen with a formal framework for assessing re-credit applications from learners who were enrolled,

Version number	Date	Summary of changes
		predominantly through Ducere, under the now-concluded VET FEE-HELP scheme.
2	October 29, 2026	Changes to Accountabilities.