



Senator the Hon Simon Birmingham
Assistant Minister for Education and Training
Liberal Senator for South Australia

MEDIA RELEASE

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Withdrawal fees banned for courses

The Government has today announced a ban on withdrawal fees that will make it easier for students to withdraw from courses that they have been inappropriately signed up to.

Assistant Minister for Education and Training Senator Simon Birmingham said this new measure will further protect students, taxpayers and the reputation of the vocational education and training (VET) sector.

“From 1 July 2015, if a student wants to withdraw from training on or before the census date, a provider will no longer be able to charge a withdrawal fee or place some other administrative barrier in the way of the student,” Senator Birmingham said.

This new measure requires that a VET provider:

- Must not have financial, administrative or other barriers in place which would prevent a student from withdrawing from a VET unit of study on or before the census date;
- Must ensure that where a student notifies the VET provider of withdrawal or cancellation the student will not remain enrolled from the date of notification;
- Must not enrol the student in subsequent VET units of study without written instructions from the student and must have a process in place for students to select, initiate or request their own enrolment in subsequent VET units of study;
- Must publish withdrawal procedures on its website and make them otherwise readily available; and
- Must not charge a student any fine, penalty or fee for withdrawal in accordance with the requirements of the VET guidelines.

“Also, from 1 July, training providers and their agents will no longer be able to market VET FEE-HELP supported training as ‘free’ or ‘Government-funded’.

“We have listened to students who have felt under pressure to make these study and payment decisions or who lacked clarity on what decisions they were making. Students will now have full information and time to consider their options carefully.

“We will continue to provide products and services that inform students on what they need to look out for when taking on a VET FEE-HELP loan, and I will continue to work with consumer law agencies to put a stop to unscrupulous enrolment practices and to protect students,” Senator Birmingham said.

Full details of the new VET Guidelines will be made available on 1 July 2015.

For more information, VET FEE-HELP providers can visit: <http://www.education.gov.au/vet-fee-help-reforms> and students can visit: www.studyassist.gov.au.

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