Student Fees Procedure - Refunds

Section 1 - Key Information

Policy Type and Approval Body	Administrative – Vice-Chancellor
Accountable Executive – Policy	Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic)
Responsible Manager – Policy	Director, Academic Services
Review Date	8 July 2028

Section 2 - Purpose

(1) This Procedure outlines procssess for the administration of refunds for domestic and international students in accordance with Commonwealth legislation, including the Higher Education Support Act 2003, the Education Services for Overseas Students Act 2000 and the National Code 2018.

Section 3 - Scope

(2) This Procedure applies to:

a. all University award courses, including subjects from award courses studied as Single, Study Abroad, or cross-institutional subjects;
b. enabling courses and microcredentials;
c. tuition fees and Overseas Student Health Cover;
d. all current, former and prospective students including those enrolled in La Trobe award courses through a third-party provider, unless specifically exempted (see below), who meet the conditions outlined in this Procedure.

(3) This Procedure does not apply to:

a. short courses (see Short Courses Policy);
b. students enrolled in subjects or courses delivered in partnership with other education providers where fees are collected by the partner. The policies of the partner institution apply to that enrolment.
c. fees for the Children's Centre, Library and or student residence.

Section 4 - Key Decisions

Key Decisions	Role
Approve refund applications – domestic students	Director, Academic Services

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Key Decisions	Role
Approve refund applications – international students	Director, Operations, Recruitment and International Operations

Section 5 - Policy Statement

(4) This Procedure forms part of the Student Fees Policy which governs its application.

Section 6 - Procedures

Part A - Preconditions for Refund Applications

(5) The University assesses applications for full or partial refunds, in line with applicable legislation and these Procedures, from students, including sponsored students, who are admitted and enrolled directly with La Trobe University but have withdrawn from their studies at the following points in their course:

a. for commencing international students, by 11.59pm AEDT on the relevant Commencement Date (for calculation details see Appendix to this Procedure);
b. for continuing international and domestic fee-paying students, by 11.59pm AEDT on the approved Census Date for the relevant teaching period (hereafter 'Census Date').

(6) For domestic students after the relevant Census Date, the provisions of the Student Fees Procedure - Remission of Debt or Fee Liability or Fee Liability apply. The University will not accept an application for a full or partial refund, in accordance with the relevant legislation and these Procedures, after the Census Date.

(7) The Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF) and incidental fees are not normally refundable. However, there may be a refundable credit where a student varies their enrolment.

International Students

Compelling and Compassionate Circumstances

(8) Where an international student gives written notice of their intention to withdraw from a course, either before or after their Commencement Date and before the Census Date, due to compelling and compassionate circumstances, the University may, at its discretion, grant a total or partial refund of tuition fees. Such compelling and compassionate circumstances may include:

a. serious illness or disability;
b. death of the student or an immediate family member, or a political, civil, or natural disaster event that directly prevents full payment of fees or the student's ability to attend and complete the course requirements.

(9) Decisions to provide a refund in these circumstances are subject to the provision of acceptable documentary evidence in support of the application.

(10) In circumstances of Provider Default, the University may arrange for the student to be offered a place in an alternative course at the provider's expense (Section 46D (d) of the ESOS Act).

Incoming Study Abroad Students

(11) For incoming Study Abroad students whose tuition is paid by a partner university or third-party provider the following applies:

a. refund applications submitted prior to the Census Date are remitted directly to the sponsoring institution/provider;
b. the University will consider refund applications submitted after the Census Date in liaison with the sponsoring institution, taking into consideration academic and administrative policies of that provider or institution.

Part B - Eligibility

(12) The University will approve a refund application of pre-paid tuition or deposit amounts, where the application meets preconditions outlined in Part A, there is a credit balance available, and under the following circumstances:

a. Provider Default;
b. certain circumstances of Student Default (including withdrawal from a course);
c. a student enrolment was changed before 11:59pm (AEDT) on the Census Date such that the student:
    i. withdrew from a subject without adding a subject, or
    ii. formally discontinued from the course, or
    iii. has an approved Leave of Absence in place.
d. there has been an overpayment of course fees or a required deposit;
e. an approved discount has been issued;
f. the course has been completed and there is an unclaimed credit amount;
g. submission by a graduate research student of a thesis prior to the end of a semester.

(13) Students who have disengaged with their course and have been assessed as Absent Without Official Leave (AWOL) may be entitled to a refund where there are no outstanding debts to the University and there is an outstanding credit in their account.

(14) The method of calculating refund entitlements in the respective circumstances for international students is outlined in the Appendix to this Procedure.

Change of Visa Status

(15) International students who provide official evidence of a change of visa status to a permanent resident of Australia or citizen of New Zealand before or during their enrolment in a course of study are subject to the following provisions in relation to a refund of tuition fees:

a. where such a student is subsequently offered a place as an Australian resident student prior to their commencement date the offer of an international student place will be withdrawn and all international tuition fees will be refunded on application before commencement;
b. for coursework students, where this occurs after commencing study in the course and before the Census Date, all international tuition fees will be refunded on application before the Census Date;
c. for graduate research candidates a change in visa status is recorded as either 1 July or 1 January. Refunds will apply where the student has pre-paid for a future semester.
d. where such a change in status occurs but the student is not offered a place as an Australian permanent resident or New Zealand citizen by the Census Date, the student will not be eligible for a full or partial refund of tuition fees paid for the period of study in which the residency status changed. On continuing their enrolment in the next period of study, the student may enrol as an Australian or New Zealand resident in a domestic fee-paying place.

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Part C - External Arrangements

(16) Where an externally-sponsored student requests a refund of tuition fees paid in advance, and this includes a sponsorship payment, the requirements of the sponsor including repayment, must be fulfilled.

(17) Scholarships awarded in the form of a fee contribution payment, in part or full, are not redeemable for a refund and will not form part of any refundable amount.

(18) The University reserves the right to apply specific and different fee refund conditions to international students enrolled in off-shore and online courses. Any such specific and different fee refund conditions are outlined in the Letter of Offer.

(19) If a student who receives US Federal Education financial aid withdraws from La Trobe University and receives a fee refund, they may owe money to the US Federal Aid Program. This Procedure is independent of the regulations for return of Title IV aid to the US Department of Education (refer to the US Financial Aid Loans website).

(20) The University must pay refunds to a person other than the student if the person is specified in the written agreement to receive refund monies (in accordance with Section 47D(3)(b) of the ESOS Act).

Part D - Applications For Refunds

(21) Applications for refunds must be made using the appropriate form (domestic or international) available from the University Refund and Remission of debt webpage and must be accompanied by any required documentation.

(22) Documents in languages other than English must be translated by a NAATI-accredited translator, and the original and a certified copy provided.

(23) Approved refund applications are submitted to the relevant University Finance Officer and processed to the original source of funds, the person/persons who originally paid the tuition fees, or the sponsoring agency paying the fees on a student's behalf. Refunds are made within four (4) weeks of receipt of all relevant documentation and completion of required processes by the University.

(24) Where an amount has been in credit in a student's account that has been inactive for more than 18 months, the University will attempt to contact the student to refund the money to the student a minimum of three (3) times. After this time unclaimed revenue funds are transferred to the State Revenue Office.

Deceased Students

(25) Where a student is deceased the personal legal representative of the deceased estate must submit an application for any payments to be refunded. The beneficiaries or administrators must provide details of the refund recipient. The University reserves the right to request official documentation to support any such claims.

Provision of False or Misleading Information

(26) If the University knows, or believes, that a student has provided false or misleading information in their application for refund, the University will notify the student immediately and will cease assessment of the application.

(27) The Department of Home Affairs (DHA) will be notified where appropriate.

Part E - Reviews

(28) Students may seek a review of a decision made under this Procedure where they are of the view that this

Procedure has not been correctly applied.

International Students

(29) International students who wish to seek a review of a decision made under this Procedure must submit a request via IntOperations@latrobe.edu.au, within 10 business days of the relevant process or decision.

Domestic Students

(30) A request to review a decision must be lodged in writing, addressed to the Director, Academic Services, within ten (10) business days of the relevant process or decision.

(31) The Director, Academic Services will arrange for a review of the decision by a senior staff member who was not involved in the original decision.

(32) A written outcome will be provided within 10 business days of the date the request was received by the University.

(33) A request to review the decision may be dismissed where the applicant cannot substantiate their request in line with the allowable grounds.

Further Review

(34) Where a student is not satisfied with the outcome of a review they may apply to the University Ombudsman for a further review of the matter, in accordance with the University's Ombudsman Statute and Regulations.

(35) If a student is not satisfied with the outcome of the review of the University Ombudsman, they may lodge a complaint with the National Student Ombudsman. This action, and the availability of other complaints and appeals processes, does not remove the right of the student to take action under Australia's consumer protection laws.

Section 7 - Definitions

(36) For the purpose of this Procedure:

a. Census Date: the day on which a student becomes liable for fees for a subject, corresponding to the date no earlier than 20 per cent and no later than one third through the period during which the subject is undertaken, which is the time between the subject commencement and completion dates;
b. charge: all fees for facilities, goods or services, excluding tuition fees and SSAF;
c. Commencement Date: the date specified in the international student agreement;
d. commencing student: a student intending to enrol at La Trobe University as indicated in the Letter of Offer and written agreement with the University;
e. continuing student: a student currently undertaking a course of study at La Trobe University who has completed at least one teaching period of study and who is eligible to continue into a subsequent teaching period;
f. course: a program of study leading to the award of a degree, diploma, or other award;
g. enrolment: the process by which a person becomes a student of a subject from or subjects within a course at La Trobe University;
h. international student: a student who is not a domestic student at the time of the relevant study, and who holds a visa with rights to study in Australia;
i. National Accreditation Authority for Translators and Interpreters (NAATI)-Accredited Translator: an interpreter or translator who has obtained professional certification from NAATI;
j. package offer student: an international student who accepts a student agreement containing more than one

course;

k. partial refund: where the University retains a portion of the total refund amount.
l. Provider Default: Under Section 46A of the ESOS Act, a registered provider defaults, in relation to an overseas student or intending overseas student and a course at a location, if:
    i. the provider fails to start providing the course to the student at the location on the agreed starting date; or
    ii. after the course starts but before it is completed, it ceases to be provided to the student at the location, and the student has not withdrawn from the course before the default day.
m. sponsored student: a student for whom tuition fees and charges are paid by a Sponsor, or a student with an approved Australia Awards scholarship;
n. Student Contribution Amount (SCA): based on the band of units a student is enrolled in, the remaining cost of a course after the government subsidy for Commonwealth supported places (CSPs) is applied;
o. Student Default: Under Section 47A of the ESOS Act, an overseas student or intending overseas student defaults, in relation to a course at a location, if:
    i. the course starts at the location on the agreed starting day, but the student does not start the course on that day (and has not previously withdrawn); or
    ii. the student withdraws from the course at the location (either before or after the agreed start date);
    iii. the University refuses to provide, or continue providing, the course to the student at the location because of one or more of the following events:
        - the student failed to pay an amount they were liable to pay the provider, directly or indirectly, to undertake the course;
        - the student breached a condition of their visa;
        - misbehaviour by the student, such as the student is suspended, excluded or expelled from the University following a finding of misconduct.
p. Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF): a mandatory contribution fee payable to a higher education provider for the establishment and provision of amenities, facilities, and support services of a non-academic and non-political nature.
q. Study Abroad: a program in which students (incoming or outgoing) enrol in one or more subjects with a higher education institution or third-party provider overseas, normally for one semester and for credit towards their course at their home institution. Tuition fees are payable at the host institution, unless the enrolment occurs under an exchange agreement in which case students are only liable for fees payable at their home institution.
r. subject: a unit of study involving students in a series of learning activities, the outcomes of which are assessed;
s. tuition fee: course or subject fees payable by students who are not enrolled in a Commonwealth Supported Place, including for Single Subjects.the fee payable for a unit of study, excluding any student contribution amount.

Section 8 - Authority and Associated Information

(37) This Procedure is made under the La Trobe University Act 2009.

Section 9 - Appendix – International Student Refund Entitlements

Tuition Fees – Coursework Students

Provider Default

(38) In circumstances of Provider Default refunds will be calculated according to the following formula:

Calculation	Processing Time
Refund amount = Weekly tuition fee × weeks in default period, where: Weekly tuition fee = (total tuition fee / number of calendar days in the course) × 7 AND Weeks in default period = number of calendar days from the default day to the end of the period to which the payment relates/7	Paid within 10 business days of the day on which the course ceased being provided

Student Default

(39) Where an international student is entitled to a refund of tuition fees the refund will be paid within four (4) weeks of receiving a complete refund form with all required supporting documentation.

Circumstance	Refund Payable and Calculation
Australian Government authorities refuse to grant an applicant a student visa	Refund of any pre-paid tuition fees less an administration charge of $500 or 5% (whichever is the lesser amount).
Australian Government authorities refuse to grant an applicant a student visa and the refusal causes the student to either withdraw from the course or fail to pay an amount owing to undertake the course	Refund amount = Weekly tuition fee × weeks in default period, where Weekly tuition fee = (total tuition fee / number of calendar days in the course) × 7 AND Weeks in default period = number of calendar days from the default day to the end of the period to which the payment relates/7
University does not allow a student to re-enrol following a finding of unsatisfactory academic progress	Any credit balance related to fees paid for any semester after which the student was made to ‘Show Cause’ will be refunded.

Commencing Students

Student Withdrawal (No Packaged Offer)

Circumstance	Refund Payable and Calculation
More than 4 weeks’ notice from La Trobe University course Commencement Date (as specified on the Letter of Offer)	90% of the pre-paid tuition fees (a 10% administrative fee is deducted) less any non-refundable deposit amount as outlined in the student agreement
Less than 4 weeks’ notice from La Trobe University course Commencement Date but prior to the Commencement Date	50% of the pre-paid tuition fees in the first semester of enrolment, less any non-refundable deposit amount as outlined in the student agreement
After the La Trobe University course Commencement Date	No refund payable

Student Withdrawal (Packaged Offer)

Circumstance	Refund Payable and Calculation
More than 4 weeks’ notice from the La Trobe University course Commencement Date (as specified in the Letter of Offer)	Refund of any pre-paid tuition fee less any non-refundable deposit amount as outlined in the student agreement

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Circumstance	Refund Payable and Calculation
Less than 4 weeks' notice from the La Trobe University course Commencement Date	50% of any pre-paid tuition fees less any non-refundable deposit amount as outlined in the student agreement
After the La Trobe University course Commencement Date	No refund payable

Tuition Fees – Graduate Research Candidates

Withdrawal from Candidature

(40) Where an international student withdraws from candidature the Graduate Research School will arrange for any further fee liabilities to cease in accordance with provisions in the Graduate Research Candidature Policy.

Early Submission of Thesis

(41) If a student submits their thesis early and before the end of a semester, they are entitled to a partial refund of fees paid for the semester based on the date of thesis submission.

(42) Once the thesis is submitted and the student moves to a Passed status, a refund for any remaining balance of tuition fees in the student account will be refunded. The refund amount is calculated in the following way:

> the daily fee rate of annual tuition fee × by the number of enrolled days after thesis submission until the end of the study period.

Refunds of Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC)

(43) If La Trobe holds the funds at the time the student applies for a refund, the University will refund the funds based on the following calculation:

the number of unused days of the OSHC Policy multiplied by the daily rate of the Policy.

(44) If the University has already passed these funds to the OSHC policy issuer at the time of application the student must contact the OSHC policy issuer for a refund. Refund terms are provided on the OSHC issuer website.

Status and Details

Status	Current
Effective Date	8th July 2025
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Approval Authority	Vice-Chancellor
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Expiry Date	Not Applicable
Responsible Manager - Policy	Lisa Constantine Director, Academic Services
Enquiries Contact	Student Administration

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