

STATEMENT OF TUITION ASSURANCE FOR EXEMPT VET STUDENT LOANS (VSL) PROVIDERS

Introduction

1. Tuition assurance protects students in the event a course provided by an approved VSL provider ceases to be provided after it starts but before it is completed. Affected students are offered a replacement course with another provider and where this is not possible, the students' FEE-HELP balance for the affected part of the course will be re-credited.
2. As an approved provider under the *VET Student Loans Act 2016*, Holmes Commercial Colleges (Melbourne) Ltd (trading as FashionMasters) , must be a party to an approved tuition assurance arrangement or have an approved exemption in place.
3. It is intended that, from 1 January 2018, FashionMasters will be exempted from the requirement to be a party to an approved tuition assurance arrangement. Instead, FashionMasters is required to comply with interim arrangements which ensure similar tuition assurance protection is provided to students.
4. This statement sets out the interim arrangements for tuition assurance that will apply from 1 January 2018 and FashionMasters's obligations from that date.
5. If any changes occur to the proposed arrangements outlined below, a revised statement will be provided on FashionMasters' website and advised to all students that have enrolled in the intervening period.

What happens if FashionMasters ceases to provide a course after it starts but before it is completed?

Information for affected students

6. FashionMasters will notify affected students in writing that an approved course is no longer provided within 2 business days after FashionMasters ceases to provide the course after it starts but before it is completed.
7. As soon as practicable, FashionMasters will also update its website to reflect that the course is no longer being delivered and to give students information about the tuition assurance arrangements.

Replacement courses

8. The Commonwealth Department of Education and Training (the Department) (or a consultant engaged by the Department) will work with affected students to identify a replacement course and arrange for students to be placed with replacement providers.
9. Replacement courses must meet the following requirements:
 - the course must lead to the same or comparable qualification as the original course;
 - the mode of delivery of the replacement course must be the same as or, with the student's consent, similar to the mode of delivery for the original course;
 - the location of the replacement course must be reasonable, having regard to the costs of, and the time required for, a student's travel; and

- the student will not incur additional fees that are unreasonable and will be able to attend the replacement course without unreasonable impacts on the student's prior commitments.
10. Affected students will be offered a replacement course and may seek a review about whether the course offered to them meets the requirements for replacement courses.
 11. A student who accepts the replacement course offered will not be required to pay the replacement provider for the replacement components of the replacement course. However, the fees payable for the remainder of the replacement course may be different from the fees payable for the original course.
 12. A student who accepts the replacement course offered will also receive course credits for parts of the original course successfully completed by the student, as evidenced by:
 - a copy of a statement of attainment or other Australian Qualifications Framework certification document issued by the course provider or an authorised issuing organisation in accordance with the Australian Qualifications Framework; or
 - a copy of an authenticated VET transcript issued by the Student Identifiers registrar.
 13. Each affected student will have a period of six (6) months in which to accept the replacement course offer. The Department may extend that period in circumstances that justify an extension.
 14. If an affected student enrolls in a course that is not a replacement course, the student may be required to pay additional tuition fees, and might not receive the course credits the student would have received if the student had enrolled in a replacement course.

Re-crediting of students' FEE-HELP balances

15. Where there is no suitable replacement course for a student, FashionMasters will re-credit the student's FEE-HELP balance for the affected parts of the original course. The amount re-credited will be equal to the amount of VET student loan used to pay tuition fees for the student for the course, or parts of the course.

Prepaid fees

16. For tuition fees paid up-front greater than \$1500, FashionMasters has in place current learner fee protection arrangements in place which meets the obligations under the Standards for RTO's 2015 Clause 7.3.
17. For tuition fees paid up-front below \$1500, students should be aware that there is no formal protection in place and students will be responsible to seek a refund for these fees directly from FashionMasters if it fails to provide the agreed services. If the provider is under external administration, this may require the student submitting a proof of debt with the external administrator.

FashionMasters' processes for assisting displaced VET Student Loans students as a Replacement Provider

In the event that a student's approved provider stops offering their course or closes, the following will occur, the:

1. Tuition Assurance (TA) administrator (appointed by the relevant Australian Government Department

- collates displaced student enrolment data and/ or facilitates student meetings
2. TA administrator identifies replacement VSL course / replacement provider options for students
 3. TA administrator contacts prospective replacement providers to advise of activation, discuss course options (student replacement course offer information)
 4. TA administrator sends displaced students initial notification with identified course options
 5. Student confirms preferred course option and TA administrator sends student a notice of replacement course offer
 6. Replacement Provider (FashionMasters in this case) is notified of acceptance of replacement course offer
 7. The Replacement Provider facilitates student enrolment and access to VSL (via eCAF), providing training schedule and identifying any additional tuition fees.
 8. The Replacement Provider undertakes reporting requirements.

FashionMasters' obligations as a Replacement Provider

To help facilitate the course assurance process, FashionMasters as a replacement provider must meet certain obligations. These are:

Enrolment in the same / similar VET course

- o FashionMasters must enrol a displaced student in the same or a similar course (leading to the same or a comparable VET qualification).
- o Students are entitled to be 'taught out' by the FashionMasters at no additional cost for replacement units of competency that make up a unit(s) of study the student has:
 - commenced (paid or unpaid) but was unable to complete due to a course or provider closure paid for but had not commenced.

Therefore where:

- o a student has passed their census date prior to activation and has provided evidence that they have commenced a unit of study, even if a debt is not recorded, FashionMasters must teach out the unit of study at no cost to the student
- o a debt is recorded for a unit of study, the unit of study must be taught out at no cost, regardless of whether the student considers they have commenced the unit of study.
- o if student circumstances are not clear, please contact the TAS administrator in the first instance.

Where a student is unable to be offered or placed in the same or a comparable course (i.e. leading to the same or a comparable VET qualification), a loan re-credit may be available for units of study a debt is recorded for.

- o The student must be provided with clear information on what remaining studies they will need to undertake to complete their qualification.
- o The student must be advised of any additional tuition fees required (including any 'gap' fee amounts, in excess of the approved course cap (for those requiring access to a VET Student Loan).

Recognition of studies completed

For any units of study a student has successfully completed with their first provider,

FashionMasters must ensure the student receives:

- o full credit towards the same or comparable VET qualification or
- o as much credit as possible towards the same or comparable VET qualification, if the Department agrees that the first course was of such a specialised nature that full credit transfer cannot be arranged.
- o Where identified, proficiencies will be reported as RPL.

Teach-out of replacement units

A student is entitled to be taught-out at no additional cost for any replacement unit (or part of a

replacement unit), if the student has already incurred a debt for that unit. i.e. FashionMasters is required to teach replacement units (reported VET units of study commenced but not completed by the student, due to the closure of their first provider) at no charge to the student.

Student data and reporting requirements

- FashionMasters must report students who have enrolled as transferring tuition assurance students, using the Higher Education Information Management System (HEIMS).
- FashionMasters must keep up-to-date enrolment information on displaced students enrolled in replacement unit/s (through course assurance). This information will include the following (and must be reported to the department as part of the FashionMasters' standard VET student data submissions):
 - (a) each student's full name and contact details
 - (b) the name of the course of study and the units of study in which each student is currently enrolled
 - (c) the amount of the VET tuition fees for each unit of study in which each student is currently enrolled
 - (d) details about the payment of those fees, including if they are to be paid upfront or involve amounts of VET Student Loans assistance
 - (e) details of any VET units of study successfully completed by each student with the VET provider
 - (f) details of credits granted by the VET provider as a replacement provider.