

Applying for a Commonwealth Supported Place Procedure

Approved by: Executive Director Course Development and Quality

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Effective date: 1 June 2026

Next review due date: 1 June 2029

Section 1. Purpose

- 1.1 This procedure outlines how TAFE NSW determines and manages eligibility for Commonwealth Supported Places (CSPs), and how students apply for and maintain these places, in accordance with the [Higher Education Support Act 2003 \(HESA\)](#).

Section 2. Scope

- 2.1 This procedure applies to TAFE NSW staff and domestic higher education students involved in or applying for a Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP).
- 2.2 This procedure covers the following processes:
- a. assessing student eligibility for a Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP)
 - b. managing enrolment processes, including the submission, and processing of the electronic Commonwealth Assistance Form (eCAF)
 - c. allocating CSPs, including eligibility rating and prioritisation where demand exceeds available places
 - d. administration of student records, including student contribution amounts and HELP loan arrangement.
 - e. managing withdrawal, refunds, re-credits, and review processes associated with CSP enrolments.

Section 3. Procedure

Check your eligibility for a Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP)

- 3.1 Domestic students enrolling in a course that offers a Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP) may be eligible if they meet the course entry requirements and at least one of the following criteria:
- a. you are an Australian citizen and will study at least one unit of your course while living in Australia
 - b. you are a New Zealand citizen and will study your entire course while living in Australia
 - c. you are an Australian permanent visa holder and will study your entire course while living in Australia

- d. you are an eligible former permanent humanitarian visa holder and will study your entire course while living in Australia
- e. you are a Pacific Engagement Visa (PEV) holder and will study your entire course while living in Australia.

3.2 In addition to the above criteria, you must meet all the following requirements:

- a. have a Unique Student Identifier (USI): a 10-digit number required for your studies and used for a HELP loan application, if needed
- b. have available Student Learning Entitlement (SLE): you must have enough SLE remaining to undertake your course
- c. meet study load limits: you cannot study more than two years' worth of higher education within a 12-month period unless TAFE NSW approves a higher study load.

3.3 Eligibility for a Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP) does not guarantee an offer, as places are limited. You can check your initial eligibility [here](#).

Apply for your course and a Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP)

3.4 Apply for a TAFE NSW Higher Education course that offers a CSP through the TAFE NSW website.

3.5 Make sure you have:

- a. Unique Student Identifier (USI), and
- b. any required documents (for example, proof of citizenship or residency).

3.6 TAFE NSW will assess your application and your initial eligibility for a CSP.

3.7 If eligible, you will receive an electronic Commonwealth Assistance Form (eCAF) to complete, as part of the enrolment process.

Complete and submit your eCAF.

3.8 Complete your eCAF: Fill in all required details carefully. The eCAF must be completed personally by you and not by TAFE NSW on your behalf.

3.9 Choose how to pay your student contribution: When completing your eCAF, you'll need to select how you want to pay your student contribution:

- a. defer your fees through a HELP loan, or
- b. pay your fees upfront.

3.10 Submit your eCAF before census date. Commonwealth Supported Places are limited, so submit your eCAF as early as possible to give yourself the best chance.

3.11 If you submit your eCAF after the census date:

- a. you will not be eligible for a CSP or HELP loan for that study period
- b. you may need to pay full fees upfront.

Enrolment and important deadlines

3.12 To keep your place in your course and be considered for a CSP, you must:

- a. submit your eCAF before the census date

- b. enrol in at least one unit of study.

3.13 If you submit your eCAF after the census date, this means:

- a. you will not be eligible for a CSP for your enrolled units, and
- b. you may need to pay full fees upfront for those units.

3.14 If you don't enrol in any units, your enrolment will be cancelled. If your enrolment is cancelled after the census date, you will not be eligible for HELP loan for that unit(s) of study.

3.15 TAFE NSW reviews your submitted eCAF to confirm your eligibility for CSP and, where applicable, a HELP loan.

When CSP places are limited

3.16 If CSPs are limited, and the number of eligible applicants exceeds the number of places available:

- a. TAFE NSW will use a fair and transparent ranking process.
- b. CSPs will be offered to the highest-ranked eligible applicants.

If you are not offered a CSP

3.17 If you are not offered a Commonwealth Supported Place due to limited availability:

- a. you may be offered a full fee-paying place on your course and
- b. you may be eligible to apply for a HELP loan to help pay your tuition fees. TAFE NSW will advise you of your eligibility based on your submitted eCAF.

Requesting a review

3.18 If you're not offered a Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP), you can ask for a review of the decision:

- a. submit a written request within 10 business days of being notified of the decision
- b. your request will be reviewed by an independent decision maker, such as the Director of Educational Operations or delegate
- c. you will receive a written outcome within 10 business days, which will outline the reasons for the decision
- d. if you are not satisfied with the outcome of the review, you can refer the matter to the [National Student Ombudsman](#).

3.19 If your review is successful and you are offered a CSP after review, TAFE NSW will, via our Student Service Team:

- a. update your student record with the Commonwealth Government, and
- b. notify the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) as required.

Your responsibilities

3.20 As a student, you must understand and meet the requirements for a Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP) and maintain your eligibility throughout your studies. Failure to do so may result in the loss of your CSP.

3.21 As a student you must meet enrolment and CSP requirements before the census date, including:

- a. submit your eCAF before the census date
- b. provide correct information and supporting documents

3.22 Failure to meet these requirements may result in the cancellation of your enrolment and the loss of your CSP.

Fixing mistakes in your eCAF

- 3.23 If you realise there's a mistake after you've submitted your eCAF.
- a. contact TAFE NSW as soon as possible
 - b. your eCAF may be placed into revision status so you can correct it
 - c. you must correct any errors within 6 weeks of the census date.
- 3.24 The timeframe for correcting errors in your eCAF does not extend the census date or provide additional time to meet eligibility requirements (including the provision of citizenship evidence).

Providing your Tax File Number (TFN)

- 3.25 If you plan to defer your student contribution using a HELP loan, you must include your Tax File Number (TFN) when completing your eCAF:
- a. provide your TFN in your eCAF, or
 - b. if you don't have a TFN, you must provide evidence that you've applied for one (from the ATO) before the census date.
- 3.26 If you don't provide a TFN or proof that you have applied for one before the census date. You will need to pay your student contribution upfront, or your enrolment may be cancelled.
- 3.27 If TAFE NSW is notified that your Tax File Number (TFN) is invalid and you do not provide a valid TFN within 28 days, your enrolment will be cancelled and any fees paid will be refunded.
- 3.28 It is not necessary for you to submit a new eCAF each semester unless you have changed to a different course or wish to provide your TFN.

Changing course, withdrawing from a subject or course or requesting a refund

- 3.29 To withdraw from your course or request a refund, you must submit a [TAFE NSW Higher Education Withdrawal Form](#). If you have paid your student contribution and withdraw before the census date, you may be eligible for a full refund.
- 3.30 If you apply and enrol into a new course, you must:
- a. submit a new eCAF Before census date. Note that eCAF is course specific and cannot be transferred to a new course
 - b. eCAFs submitted after the census date will not be accepted for that study period
 - c. fee deferral (HELP loan) will only apply to future semesters.
- 3.31 If you withdraw from one or more subjects before the census date: You will not be charged a student contribution for those subjects, and you will not incur a HELP loan debt (if selected) for those subjects.

- 3.32 If you withdraw from a course or subject(s) after the census date, you will usually still need to pay your student contribution or HELP loan debt for that study period. However, you may be eligible for a refund or remission (removal) of your debt if you withdrew due to special circumstances.
- 3.33 For more information, refer to the [Tuition Fees, Payments, HELP, Refund and Review Procedure](#), which includes details on:
- key dates (including census dates)
 - incidental fees
 - fee payment options
 - tuition fee arrangements for students enrolled in an accredited qualification
 - withdrawal requirements and implications
 - refunds and re-credit eligibility after the census date
 - special circumstances provisions
 - how to request a review of a refund or re-credit decision

Changing how to pay your student contribution

- 3.34 You can change your payment option for future study periods:
- to defer your fees (HELP loan), you must submit a new eCAF with your TFN before the census date for the relevant semester
 - if you choose to pay your fees upfront, you do not need to submit a new eCAF.

Commonwealth Assistance Notice (CAN)

- 3.35 After the census date, you will receive a Commonwealth Assistance Notice (CAN) within 4 weeks. This will include information about your enrolment, your fees, and any HELP loan you have applied for, in accordance with section 17 of the Higher Education Support (Administration) Guidelines 2022.
- 3.36 Students must notify TAFE NSW in writing of any errors or omissions in the CAN within 14 calendar days of the date of the CAN being issued and request a corrected CAN.

Fees for Commonwealth Supported Students Exceeding Award Requirements

- 3.37 If you are a Commonwealth supported student, you will be charged full tuition fees for any subjects that do not count towards your qualification, or for subjects taken in addition to the requirements of your course.

Monitoring

- 3.38 The Responsible Officer will receive feedback and monitor the effectiveness of this procedure and the provisions therein, making recommendations for amendments to the Accountable Officer as required.
- 3.39 This procedure will undergo formal review every three years, or where legislative or TAFE NSW operational changes necessitate it.

Section 4. Responsibilities

Position, Branch or Unit	Responsibilities
Executive Director Course Development and Quality	Oversight of the development, review, and amendment of this procedure, with the authority to approve revisions to the procedure to ensure alignment with regulatory and legislative requirements and current TAFE NSW operations.
Senior Manager Higher Education	Supports the Accountable Officer in the development, monitoring, review, amendment of this procedure, to ensure alignment with regulatory and legislative requirements and current TAFE NSW operations.
Director Student Services Operations (or delegate)	Student Services team are responsible for the administration of enrolments and the maintenance of accurate student records, in line with applicable policies and procedures. This includes the processing and management of electronic Commonwealth Assistance Forms (eCAFs), and ensuring compliance with Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP) and HELP loan requirements.
Director of Learning and Teaching (or delegate)	Faculty teams are responsible for the assessment of enrolment applications, verification of course entry requirements, and determination of eligibility for a Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP). This includes applying an eligibility rating methodology to inform the fair and transparent allocation of CSPs from a limited pool of available places.
Director Educational Operations	Undertook an independent review of decisions upon receipt of a written appeal submitted to TAFE NSW. This includes ensuring a fair, unbiased, and transparent review process, in accordance with applicable policies and procedures, and providing a written outcome with reasons for the decision.
Student	Students are responsible for understanding and complying with the requirements of this procedure, including meeting eligibility criteria, submitting required forms and information on time, and ensuring the accuracy of the information provided.

Section 5. Governance information

Governance	Details
Policy, legislation, regulations, and standards	This procedure is governed by the: Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA) Higher Education Tuition Fees, Payments, HELP Refund and Review Policy
Supporting guides: HELP Information Resources	HELP booklets and fact sheets provide key information on each Higher Education Loan Program, including eligibility criteria, application processes, withdrawal requirements, repayment obligations, and a glossary of terms. HELP Publications - Study Assist, Australian Government
Associated policies and procedures	This procedure is to be read together with: TAFE NSW Higher Education Tuition Fees Payments HELP Refunds Review Procedure.
Accountable Officer	Executive Director Course Development and Quality
Responsible Officer	Senior Manager Higher Education
Content Manager number	PROJ26/00226
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Section 6. Definitions

Word	Definition
Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP)	A Commonwealth subsidised place in a TAFE NSW higher education course where part of the tuition fees is paid by the government. This subsidy does not need to be repaid.
electronic Commonwealth Assistance Form (eCAF)	The online form that students must complete to apply for a Commonwealth Supported Place (CSP) and/or a HELP loan. It collects required information to assess eligibility and must be submitted by the census date.
Student Contribution	The amount a Commonwealth supported student is required to pay towards the cost of their tuition for each unit of study. The remaining cost is subsidised by the Australian Government. The student contribution amount may change each year based on course costs and Australian Government settings.

Word	Definition
Commonwealth Assistance Notice	A notice issued to TAFE NSW students who are Commonwealth supported and/or who have requested a HELP loan. It is provided after the census date and includes details of enrolment, student contribution amounts, and any HELP loan for the relevant study period.
Commonwealth Assisted Students	Students who receive financial assistance from the Australian Government in the form of a HELP loan to pay all or part of their tuition fees.

Section 7. Document history

No.	Effective	Approved by	Amendment
1	1 June 2026	Executive Director Course Development and Quality	New Procedure