



Department of Education and
Early Childhood Development

School Resource Kit

Chapter 9: Finance

International student program

Every
child,
every
opportunity

A large red graphic on the right side of the page, consisting of several overlapping rectangular shapes. The top-most shape contains the text "Every child, every opportunity" in a white, handwritten-style font.

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1. Fees and Charges

Legislative Authority

The ESOS Act, Regulations and the National Code 2007 require that students must be aware of all applicable fees being charged by an education provider at the time of application. It is an offence to charge additional fees unless previously advised. The International Student Application Form details the list of current fees and outlines the policy regarding refunds to ensure student awareness.

ESOS National Code, Standard 3 Formalisation of Enrolment states that:

Written agreements between... DEECD...and students set out the services to be provided, fees payable and information in relation to refunds of course money.

3.1 DEECD ...must enter into a written agreement with the student, signed or otherwise accepted by that student (or the student's parent or legal guardian if the student is under 18 years of age), concurrently with or prior to accepting course money from the student. The agreement must:

- a. identify the course or courses in which the student is to be enrolled and any conditions on his or her enrolment;*
- b. provide an itemised list of course money payable by the student;*
- c. provide information in relation to refunds of course money;*
- d. set out the circumstances in which personal information about the student may be shared between the registered provider and the Australian Government and designated authorities and, if relevant, the Tuition Assurance Scheme and the ESOS Assurance Fund Manager. This information includes personal and contact details, course enrolment details and changes, and the circumstance of any suspected breach by the student of a student visa condition; and*
- e. advise the student of his or her obligation to notify the registered provider of a change of address while enrolled in the course.*

Under the Victorian Education and Training Reform Act 2006, Section 2.2.8 (1), international students must:

...pay an application fee, and if enrolled, a fee for the instruction and educational and other related services provided to the student by the school

The payment of tuition and other fees is set out in a Ministerial Order.

Under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006, Section 2.2.9, the Minister

...may make an (Ministerial) Order for or with respect to any matter that relates to the payment of fees by an overseas student applying to be enrolled or enrolled at Government schools including, but not limited to:

- a) *the amount of any fee payable under section 2.2.8*
- b) *any period to which the fee relates*
- c) *the date on which the fee is payable*
- d) *the person to whom the fee is to be paid*
- e) *the extent to which and manner in which the fee is to be apportioned between the school and the Secretary.*

Under the Education and Training Reform Act 2006, Section 2.2.8, the Principal must remove from school any international student who has not paid the required fees by the due date. This action should only be taken in consultation with and on the advice of the International Education Division (IED) and would only occur after the Division has exhausted all other avenues to recover the outstanding fees.

Current Fee Structure

The Table of Fees can be found at: www.study.vic.gov.au/publications/default.asp. All payment of application, tuition and optional service fees must be made to DEECD. If the student requests that the Department arrange Overseas Student Health Cover (OHSC), payment for this must be paid in accordance with the due date stated on the invoice.

Note

Schools do not have the authority to waive the application fee, tuition fee or any of the optional service fees.

Application fee

- Standard, temporary and dependant international students must pay a non-refundable Application Fee of AUD\$206 (2009) for enrolment in a Victorian Government School.
- No application will be processed unless the fee of AUD\$206 is attached to the appropriate application form.
- Payment is accepted by credit card (Visa or MasterCard) bank cheque or draft or money order (Note that application fees should not be paid directly at a bank.)
- Cash, personal or company cheques are not accepted.
- Exempt students are not required to pay the Application Fee.
- Students who transfer from one Victorian Government School to another are required to pay a \$515 (2009) non-refundable transfer fee. This fee is to be paid at the time of transfer and can be made by one of the accepted methods indicated above.

Tuition fees

- Tuition fees are payable in advance for the full year and must be paid by the due date stated on the invoice.
- Payment is accepted by credit card (Visa or MasterCard) by bank cheque or draft, by money order or by direct deposit to any Westpac branch.
- Tuition fees do not cover the costs of books, uniforms, stationery, school trips or camps.
- As of the 1st of January 2009, there is no sibling discount applicable to siblings of full fee international students. These students are subject to full international student fees as specified in the ministerial order.
- Tuition for an English language course provided by DEECD is part of the annual tuition fee.
- A reduced fee is offered to dependants of international students.
- DEECD does not accept liability for any fees paid by parents to an agent, either in Australia or overseas.
- Refunds will only be made in accordance with the Departmental refund policy. Note that temporary students are not eligible for a refund of tuition fees.
- Tuition fees may vary from year to year.

Note

International students should not be asked to pay any voluntary contributions/levies as these are included in the tuition fees.

International students should not be charged for any compulsory excursions/school trips where these are part of the course of study or curriculum.

If local students are required to pay for optional excursions/school trips, then international students may also be requested to pay for this optional excursion/school trip.

Schools retain the discretion not to charge international students for the optional excursion/school trips.

Optional service fees

- Upon request DEECD can arrange for the students to be met at Melbourne International Airport and taken to their homestay accommodation. A non-refundable Airport Reception Fee applies to students selecting this option.
- DEECD can arrange homestay accommodation for international students and charges a non-refundable Accommodation Placement Fee to students who select this service.
- If the student requests these services but does not use them, the fee will not be refunded.

VCE enrolment fees

- Students enrolled in any Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) units will be required to pay an enrolment fee to the Victorian Curriculum and Assessment Authority (VCAA). This fee is paid to the VCAA after enrolment in the VCE program has been finalised.
- The VCAA fee may vary from year to year. Further information on the VCE including fees and charges can be obtained from www.vcaa.vic.edu.au.

Overseas Student Health Cover (OSHC)

- OSHC is compulsory for all international students.
- Students can arrange their own OSHC independently or request that DEECD arrange it on their behalf. A policy number or a copy of the policy must be provided to ISPU as evidence of independently arranged OSHC.
- If DEECD arranges the OSHC, the premium must be paid to DEECD upon receipt of the relevant invoice. DEECD forwards OSHC payments to the designated health provider (currently Medibank Private) on a monthly basis. Once Medibank Private receives notification from DEECD, the health provider sends the OSHC membership card to the student in the following manner:
 1. Students who have supplied Medibank Private with their Australian residential address will have the cards sent directly to this address (a requirement of the Privacy Act).
 2. Students who have not provided Medibank Private with a local home address will have their cards sent directly by Medibank to the students' host school.
- Health coverage arranged by DEECD commences 7 days before the date the student commences studies. If the student arrives in Australia prior to this time, alternate health coverage for the preceding period is recommended – this may be possible through a travel insurance policy.
- Prior to 2009, health cover arranged by DEECD was charged on an annual basis. From 2009 onwards, health coverage arranged by DEECD for commencing students is charged in advance for the entire period of the student visa.
- Schools are required to obtain proof of each international student's health coverage on an annual basis and retain on file.
- If a student has lost or requires a replacement membership card he/she can contact Medibank Private on 132 331 or email: overseas_students@medibank.com.au. The following information will be required:
 - student name
 - student ID
 - date of birth
 - school name and address
 - Medibank Private Membership number (if known).

An electronic card can now be generated/downloaded from the Medibank website.

- International students transferring from another school or institution should already have OSHC membership. The ISRU will obtain membership details when assessing the enrolment. The international student will not be required to pay the premium on acceptance of the offer, provided there is adequate cover from existing OHSC membership.
- Students entering the Victorian Government School system from a private provider are responsible for ensuring that their OSHC policy is renewed. This should be verified by the school.
- Visa holders with children should have family overseas health cover that covers all dependents.
- For further details of OSHC Membership and coverage please visit www.medibank.com.au

Payment of invoices

An invoice for payment of tuition fees, optional service fees and the OSHC premium (if applicable) will be sent to the student together with the Offer Letter. Students who are continuing from one year to the next may elect to pay their tuition fees in full or by two instalments. Students who elect to pay the first instalment must pay the balance of the invoice by the end of Term 1 of the school year.

Note

Temporary international students must pay tuition fees for the weeks of their enrolment in advance; payment cannot be made by instalment.

Schools do not have the authority to alter or extend the due date for payment of fees.

In exceptional circumstances, a payment plan will be considered upon written request by the student or by his/her representative providing evidence of exceptional circumstances. All written requests will be submitted to the International Student Finance Manager. Approval of all payment plans shall be made by the International Student Finance Manager or by his or her delegate.

The following table indicates the fees to be paid according to the anticipated date of commencement at school. For example, a student commencing in Term 1 is required to pay the application fee, the OSHC (if applicable) and tuition fees for terms 1– 4.

Student Commencing	Application Fee	OSHC	Term 1 Fee	Term 2 Fee	Term 3 Fee	Term 4 Fee	Following Year	
							Term 1 Fee	Term 2 Fee
Term 1	√	√	√	√	√	√		
Term 2	√	√		√	√	√		
Term 3	√	√			√	√		
Term 4	√	√				√	√	√

Payment Options

There are a number of options for making payments:

1. Bank cheque, bank draft and telegraphic transfer payments can be made, in Australian dollars, payable to the Department of Education & Early Childhood Development.
2. Credit card payments can be made by completing the detachable section of the invoice, or by sending the credit card details via fax, email or phone to the Finance Team.
3. Direct deposits can be made at any Westpac branch (the student ID must be quoted when making payment.)

Note

DEECD will not be responsible for any monies paid by a student to an agent or any third party.

Temporary international students must pay tuition fees for the weeks of their enrolment in advance; payment cannot be made by instalment.

Personal or company cheques will not be accepted.

Policy – Collection of outstanding fees

This policy aims to ensure that activities associated with collection of outstanding fees undertaken by the IED are conducted in accordance with the current Ministerial Order. This policy applies to fees paid by international students for instruction and educational services provided by a Victorian Government School, including English Language Schools/Centres, specialist schools, the Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School and the Victorian School of Languages.

Guidelines

1. The Principal should not suspend services to an international student for having outstanding fees without having discussed the situation with the IED.
2. Fees must be paid by the due date stated in the invoice. Due dates for fees payable are set by Ministerial Order and cannot be adjusted.
3. The Finance team is responsible for identifying students who have outstanding fees. The Finance team provides schools with a list of outstanding fees once per term, to enable schools to assist with managing this issue. Schools are asked to investigate the circumstances of each case and then contact their assigned Program Development Officer (PDO) to provide advice.
4. The Finance team and PPSSU work together and with schools to resolve all cases of outstanding fees.
5. Where fees remain unpaid, outstanding fee letters are generated by the Finance team and sent to schools to forward to students or their parents.
6. Departmental collection policy governs actions to collect unpaid fees.

Note

Any application for exemption of fees must have the written support of the Principal and must include verifiable evidence that the financial hardship is extenuating and that it occurred after the student commenced studies in the International Student Program (ISP).

7. Non-payment of required fees may result in the IED reporting students to DIAC for breach of a visa condition. Prior to taking this action, the Finance team will send a letter to the parents advising of this proposed action and of a defined appeal period.
8. Schools should liaise with the PPSSU about what action to take at this stage.
9. As far as possible, schools and the IED will endeavour to resolve outstanding tuition fee issues directly with the parents and will not involve students unless the circumstances require cessation of enrolment.

2. Disbursement of Fees to Schools

International Student Program Finance Team

1. The Finance team will disburse tuition fees once per term to schools with international students. Schools will receive an itemised statement which lists the student/s included in the payment and the date when payment will be received. The statement is sent by email to the school's central email address.
2. Payment should be received in the school bank account two weeks prior to the end of each term, for students who are enrolled and have paid for that term's tuition.
3. Schools should verify that the details provided on the disbursement notification are correct. If there are any discrepancies or any other financial queries, please notify the Finance Team by email on: jsfinance@edumail.vic.gov.au
4. A copy of the annual fee disbursement rate card is provided to all schools participating in the ISP each year.
5. The calculation of disbursement is based on the relevant Ministerial Order and the actual fees paid. Note that payment is not disbursed to a school if it is outstanding (has not been paid by student.)

The formula to calculate the disbursement for an individual is as follows:

Int. Student Tuition Fee
Payable to Schools

Number of school weeks in Term X Number weeks atten = Disbursement amount

If a student attends VSL and/or ELS/C, the amount received will decrease accordingly.

Commonly Asked Questions

Why has our school not received payment for a student who has commenced at the school?

- Either the student details have not been entered into CASES21 or the following fields did not match with the IED database at the time of disbursement:
 - international Student ID number
 - surname
 - date of birth
 - enrolment confirmation (school has advised ISRU of enrolment confirmation).

- Schools should ensure CASES21 data is entered promptly and accurately.
- The student may have changed school and the Finance team has not been advised.
- The student has not paid their tuition fees relating to the disbursement payment.
- The school has not provided the IED with a Recipient Created Tax Invoice (RCTI) form.

Why has the proportion of fees payable to the VSL not been deducted from the disbursement even though the student is attending the VSL?

The ISRU has not received the VSL Application Form from the VSL for processing. Once the form has been received the disbursement will be adjusted.

Our school has received a disbursement amount that does not match the year level of enrolment. Why?

The student has been enrolled in school at a different year level to that which they applied for and therefore has been incorrectly charged. For example, the student has been enrolled at school in Year 11; however the IED database has them enrolled as a Year 10 student (or vice versa). Please notify the Finance team ASAP.

Why has an amount been deducted from our disbursement?

Amounts are deducted from school disbursements when:

- A school has incorrectly received funding for a student after they have withdrawn.
- A school incorrectly receives disbursement for a student who has not attended the school.
- A student becomes exempt from paying fees – the school disbursement is reduced from the day the exemption is granted.

A school incorrectly receives funding for any other reason.

3. Refund Policy

Legislative Authority

ESOS National Code, Standard 3 Formalisation of Enrolment specifies that:

3.2 The registered provider must include in the written agreement the following information, which is to be consistent with the requirements of the ESOS Act, in relation to refunds of course money in the case of student and provider default:

- a. amounts that may or may not be repaid to the student (including any course money collected by education agents on behalf of the registered provider);*
- b. processes for claiming a refund;*
- c. a plain English explanation of what happens in the event of a course not being delivered; and*
- d. a statement that “This agreement, and the availability of complaints and appeals processes, does not remove the right of the student to take action under Australia’s consumer protection laws”.*

4. Policy

The international student refund policy applies to all international students enrolled at all Victorian Government Schools, except for temporary international students.

The refund policy is applied according to the student's enrolment period.

Refunds will be processed only within 6 months from the date the students cancelled their enrolment or were granted a new visa. **This condition is to be waived for all students who applied to the program prior to 2006.**

A refund will not be processed unless a completed Cancellation and Refund Request form is provided by the parent with all required information. If the student's visa application is denied, or the student withdraws from the program once a visa has been issued, the student (if over 18), or the parents will need to contact the International Student Recruitment Unit for a Cancellation and Refund Request Form. The form must be completed and returned to the IED with all required documentation. The refund will be processed within four weeks of receiving the completed form with appropriate evidence. The Cancellation and Refund Request form is also available in the publications section of the website: www.study.vic.gov.au

Note that the parent / guardian signature on the refund request form must agree with the signature on the original application form. The full Refund Policy is outlined in the International Student Application Form.

Non-refundable fees

The following fees are not refundable if the service/s was requested at the time of application but not subsequently used:

- Application fee
- Accommodation placement fee
- Airport transfer fee
- School transfer fee
- Tuition fees if:
 - a student fails to comply with the performance conditions or code of conduct of the school
 - after arrival in Australia a student fails to meet the student visa requirements imposed by the Australian Government.

Procedure - Refundable fees

When can a refund be claimed?

A student may be entitled to a refund of some or all of the tuition fees paid under the following circumstances:

Reason for refund	Refund Due
Student is not granted a visa	Full refund of all fees paid less the application fee
Student withdraws after a visa is issued and before commencement	Refund of tuition fees paid less: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30% of annual tuition fees paid • Application Fee • Accommodation Placement Fee • Airport Reception Fee
Student withdraws after a visa is issued and after commencement (or fails to commence on the first day of term for any reason)	Refund of tuition fees paid less: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fees for the current term • 30% of annual tuition fees paid for future semesters of the year in which the student withdraws • Application Fee • Accommodation Placement Fee • Airport Reception Fee
Student's visa status changes to a fee exempt sub-class	A refund of fees for weeks paid for but unused from the date the new (fee exempt) visa status is granted
Student breaches visa conditions	No refund
DEECD cannot deliver the program which the student has enrolled in**	Full refund
DEECD cancels the student enrolment less than one month before the student commences**	Full refund

All refunds will be paid within four weeks of DEECD receiving the completed Cancellation and Refund Request Form, except for those marked ** which will be paid within two weeks of receipt of the completed form.

Evidence must be supplied as follows:

Situation	Evidence required
Move overseas before their course finishes	Copy of passport departure stamp
Move from a Victorian Government School to another Australian school	Copy of new confirmation of enrolment or letter of offer
Have their visa status changed so they no longer have to pay fees	Evidence of change in visa status
Have their visa refused or cancelled without reason	Visa refusal letter from DIAC

Refunds Applicable

Pre-commencement

Situation	Refund Available
Student has received an offer but is refused a visa to enter Australia	Full refund of tuition fees paid
DEECD cancels the student's enrolment up to one month before the start of a course without explanation	Full refund of tuition fees paid
DEECD is unable to deliver the program	Full refund of tuition fees paid
Student fails to commence the course for any reason after a visa is issued	A full refund of tuition fees paid less 30% of the annual tuition fee for the year in which the student withdraws

Post-commencement

Situation	Refund Available
Student cancels after commencing Term 1	Refund of tuition fees paid for Terms 2–4 less 30% of the annual tuition fee
Student cancels after commencing Term 2	Refund of tuition fees paid for Terms 3–4 less 30% of the annual tuition fee
Student cancels after commencing Term 3	Refund of tuition fees paid for Term 4 less 30% of the annual tuition fee
Student cancels after commencing Term 4	No refund of current year's tuition. If paid, the future year's tuition fees will be refunded less 30% of the annual tuition fee for the year in which the student withdraws
Change of visa status to a residency visa where tuition fees are not required e.g. permanent residency visa	Refund of all tuition fees paid for any weeks after the date of visa grant

Cancellation of enrolment

1. If tuition fees are not paid by the specified date on the invoice, the student is in breach of enrolment conditions. Repeated failure to pay may lead to cancellation of enrolment
2. If a student's attendance falls below 80% or the student fails to meet the ISP's course progress standards as required by DIAC, enrolment will be cancelled without refund.
3. Failure to adhere to student disciplinary regulations may lead to the cancellation of the enrolment without refund.

Processing of refunds

1. In accordance with the ESOS Act 2000 and the ESOS National Code 2007, refunds (in the case of student default) will be made within 4 weeks of the date of receipt of a correctly completed application for refund¹.
2. Requests for refunds must be accompanied by appropriate evidence; failure to provide this evidence may delay the refund process.
3. Continuing students enrolled in subsequent years who are entitled to a refund will receive the refund as a credit towards further tuition fees. No payment of refunds will be made to continuing students until they withdraw from the program.
4. Refunds will not be paid unless a request is received within 6 months from the date the student cancelled their enrolment or was granted a new visa.
5. Refunds will only be paid by Electronic Funds Transfer (EFT) to bank accounts within Australia or by either Telegraphic Transfer or Bank Draft to bank accounts overseas.
6. In the case of DEECD default, DEECD will provide the student with a statement that explains how the refund has been calculated.
7. Parents can request a refund to be paid to a third party; however, the parent's signature must match with the signature on the original application form. If the signature does not match the refund payment will be made directly to the parent.

Note

Only parents can request a refund to be paid to another party on their behalf.

Where a third party, such as a registered agent or a student requests a refund, the refund will only be paid to the parents.

¹ In the case of DEECD default the refund shall be made within 2 weeks of the default date.

Policy – Refunds for Temporary International Students

Temporary international students pay fees for the entirety of their course prior to commencement. There is no refund of either the application fee or the tuition fees for temporary students. A grievance process is available to temporary international students in the case of a complaint. The student or parent may pursue other legal remedies such as taking action under Australia's consumer protection laws.

Queries about refunds

Enquiries or complaints regarding refund calculations are to be made to the Finance team, IED by email on isfinance@edumail.vic.gov.au or telephone on 9637 2990.

5. Resources

- IED Finance Team email: isfinance@edumail.vic.gov.au
- OSHC: www.medibank.com.au or e-mail overseas_students@medibank.com.au.
- Refund Policy & Cancellation and Refund Request Form
- Table of Fees: www.study.vic.gov.au/Intstu/fees.htm
- VCAA: www.vcaa.vic.edu.au