EduSmart
INSTITUTE

Fees, Payments, Refunds and Student Financial Protection

Policy and Procedure

M03 | EduSmart Institute

Purpose of this document
A short, student-facing control for course fees, payment arrangements, refunds and protection of prepaid fees. Detailed prices are kept in the current Fees and Payments information so this policy does not need to be rewritten every time a price changes.

Document Control

Field	Details
Document ID	M03
Document title	Fees, Payments, Refunds and Student Financial Protection Policy and Procedure
Organisation	EduSmart Institute
Version	1.1
Status	For approval
Effective date	On approval
Review	Annually, and earlier where fees, payment arrangements, legislation, regulation or delivery arrangements materially change
Owner	RTO Manager / delegated compliance officer
Approval	Chief Executive Officer / authorised governing person
Applies to	Domestic fee-for-service VET students and prospective students, including fees paid on their behalf by another person or organisation
Primary evidence	Enrolment Automation; Compliance Calendar; Document Control Register; finance/payment records
ASQA coverage	Outcome Standard 2.1; Compliance Standard 18

1. Purpose and scope

EduSmart Institute will make fees and payment obligations clear before enrolment, collect fees fairly, protect prepaid student fees, and make refund decisions consistently and transparently.

This policy applies to nationally recognised training, assessment and Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) services provided to domestic VET students. Where an employer or other person pays on behalf of a student, the payer-specific commercial arrangement may also apply, but it does not reduce the student rights or fee-protection obligations that apply by law.

2. What students are told before enrolment

Before enrolment or before any fee is required to be paid, whichever occurs first, EduSmart Institute provides or directs the prospective student to current information that clearly states:

- the total course fee and what is included;
- the payment plan, due dates and payment conditions;
- any additional, optional or replacement charges that may apply;
- the refund and withdrawal arrangements;
- RPL and Credit Transfer fee treatment;
- any costs or liabilities the student may need to meet; and
- the process for requesting a refund or disputing a fee decision.

The version of the fee and enrolment terms accepted by the student is recorded through the enrolment workflow. If a change to fees or arrangements may affect an enrolled student, EduSmart Institute will advise the student as soon as practicable. A fee increase will not be applied retrospectively to an existing enrolment unless the student has agreed to an additional or changed service.

3. Fees, inclusions and additional charges

Current prices are published in EduSmart Institute's controlled Fees and Payments information and/or the applicable course enrolment information. This policy intentionally does not hard-code course prices.

Fee type	EduSmart treatment
Course fee	Covers the training, learning resources, support and standard assessment services described in the applicable course information.
Payment plan	Where offered, the full schedule and amounts are disclosed before enrolment.
RPL screening	Initial eligibility/suitability screening is not a competency decision. The current fee treatment is stated in the RPL information.
Formal RPL assessment	Charged only as published and agreed. Payment does not guarantee that RPL will be granted.
Credit Transfer	No fee is charged for standard Credit Transfer processing where valid AQF certification evidence can be verified.
Additional assessment / gap training	Only charged where it falls outside the standard included service and the student is told the charge and agrees before the service is provided.
Replacement / administration charges	Only charged where a current published charge applies, for example an optional replacement document or other requested service.

4. Payment plans, invoices and receipts

- Students receive the applicable payment schedule before they commit to enrolment.
- Payments are recorded against the student enrolment and the service to which they relate.
- Invoices and/or receipts are issued or made available through the approved finance/payment system.
- EduSmart Institute keeps records of amounts invoiced, received, refunded and outstanding.
- Payment plans are configured so the amount of prepaid fees held for undelivered services remains within the approved fee-protection position.

5. Protection of prepaid student fees

EduSmart Institute uses a low-upfront-payment model. Unless an approved fee-protection arrangement is in place, EduSmart Institute will not hold more than $1,500 in prepaid fees for undelivered services from or on behalf of an individual in relation to the same VET course.

The $1,500 threshold is monitored across all relevant payments for the same course, including instalments and RPL-related payments. Payments must not be split into separate invoices or products to avoid the threshold.

Operating control
Payment gateways and manual payment processes must prevent the prepaid balance for undelivered services exceeding $1,500 for an individual student unless EduSmart Institute has implemented an ASQA-compliant fee-protection arrangement.

6. Missed or failed payments

If a payment is missed or fails, EduSmart Institute will notify the student and provide a reasonable opportunity to correct the payment or contact us to discuss the situation. Where an amount remains overdue, EduSmart Institute may pause access to future training or assessment services until an arrangement is made.

Suspension for non-payment does not remove the student's right to access their records, make a complaint, request withdrawal or exercise any rights available under Australian Consumer Law.

7. Withdrawal and refunds

When the student withdraws	Refund position
Before the agreed course/service commencement	Any refund is determined under the fee and enrolment terms accepted by the student and applicable consumer law. Any separately disclosed enrolment, administration or other service already provided may be retained where lawful.
After course/service commencement	Future instalments scheduled after the effective withdrawal date are cancelled. Fees already paid are not refundable merely because the student did not participate, did not complete learning or assessment, or changed their mind. This does not limit any right to a refund that applies under Australian Consumer Law.
Payment period already commenced	Where an instalment relates to a payment period or service period that has already commenced, there is no automatic pro-rata refund because the student stops participating during that period, subject to the accepted enrolment terms and consumer law.
EduSmart cancels or cannot deliver	Section 9 applies. Fees paid for services EduSmart Institute cannot provide will be dealt with under the applicable remedy, refund and fee-protection requirements.

A student may withdraw at any time through EduSmart Institute's withdrawal process. Once the withdrawal takes effect, future scheduled instalments are cancelled. The student remains responsible for fees already due for services or payment periods that commenced before the effective withdrawal date. A student's non-participation, failure to submit work or decision not to use training and support made available to them does not, by itself, create a right to a refund. EduSmart Institute will not impose undisclosed withdrawal charges.

8. RPL and Credit Transfer

Recognition of Prior Learning

- RPL is an assessment pathway and is offered in accordance with M01 Training, Assessment, RPL, Credit Transfer & Validation Policy and Procedure.
- Formal RPL fees are stated in the current Fees and Payments information before the student proceeds.
- RPL assessment work may include evidence review, verification, questioning, demonstrations and assessor judgement. The fee is for the assessment service and does not guarantee a Competent outcome.
- If an RPL assessment has not commenced, any refund is determined under the published RPL cancellation terms and this policy.
- If substantive RPL assessment work has commenced or been completed, that delivered assessment service is not refundable merely because RPL is not granted, subject to consumer law.

Credit Transfer

Standard Credit Transfer processing is not separately charged. Where verified Credit Transfer reduces the training or assessment services required, the effect on any package fee or future instalments will be as stated in the course fee information accepted at enrolment. No undisclosed fee will be introduced after enrolment.

9. If EduSmart cancels or cannot deliver

If EduSmart Institute cancels a course or is unable to deliver services for which a student has paid, the student will be offered an appropriate remedy. This may include transfer to an equivalent service by agreement or a refund of fees paid for services not delivered. Any applicable prepaid fee-protection arrangement will also be applied.

EduSmart Institute will communicate the change as soon as practicable and will not require a student to pay extra for replacement delivery that is needed because EduSmart Institute could not provide the agreed service.

10. Refund request and decision procedure

Step	Control
1. Request	Student submits the approved online withdrawal/refund request, or staff records a written request received by another channel.
2. Verify	Administration confirms the student, payer, enrolment, date of request, fees paid, guarantee position and relevant service/assessment records.
3. Calculate	Undelivered services and any lawful disclosed deductions are identified from records, not estimates made solely at the time of the request.
4. Decide	An authorised officer records the decision and reasons.
5. Communicate	The student and payer, where applicable, receive the written outcome, refund calculation and review/complaint pathway.
6. Pay and reconcile	Approved refunds are processed to the original payer/payment method where practicable and the finance record is reconciled.

EduSmart Institute aims to determine a complete refund request within 10 business days. Approved refunds will be processed promptly after the decision. If more information is needed, the student will be told what is required and kept informed of the delay.

11. Review and appeal rights

A student who disagrees with a fee or refund decision may ask EduSmart Institute to review the decision and may use the M04 Complaints & Appeals Policy and Procedure. A fee/refund dispute is separate from an assessment appeal, although both processes may apply to the same student.

Nothing in this policy limits rights or remedies available under Australian Consumer Law or another applicable law.

12. Financial and compliance records

EduSmart Institute keeps enough evidence to show what the student was told, what terms they accepted, what was paid, what services were provided and how any refund decision was reached. Records include, where applicable:

- the controlled fee/refund terms applicable at enrolment;
- enrolment acceptance, commencement and withdrawal dates where applicable;
- invoices, receipts, payment and outstanding-balance records;
- RPL payment and assessment-status records;
- withdrawal/refund requests, calculations, approvals and payment records;
- communications about changes, missed payments or refunds; and
- complaints or reviews relating to fee decisions.

The Enrolment Automation records the fee/payment terms accepted and the relevant enrolment and withdrawal evidence. The Compliance Calendar records review obligations. This policy and its current approved version are recorded in the Document Control Register. Routine financial transactions remain in the finance/payment system and do not require a separate compliance register.

13. Responsibilities

Role	Responsibility
CEO / authorised governing person	Approves the fee model, this policy and any fee-protection arrangement.
RTO Manager / compliance	Maintains regulatory alignment, oversees disclosures and reviews refund decisions or exceptions.
Finance / administration	Maintains payment records, monitors prepaid fee exposure, issues receipts and processes approved refunds.
Enrolment / systems owner	Ensures current fee and refund terms are presented before commitment

	and the accepted version is recorded.
Assessors	Record when substantive assessment/RPL work commences or is completed where this may affect a refund calculation.
Students	Provide accurate information, meet agreed payment arrangements or contact EduSmart promptly if circumstances change.

14. Internal operating checks

- Keep one current public Fees and Payments source and ensure course information, enrolment terms and payment products match it.
- Check the prepaid fee position whenever payment amounts or timing change.
- Record the fee/refund terms accepted by each student.
- Review this policy whenever a fee, refund, payment, sales channel or fee-protection arrangement materially changes.
- Use the Compliance Calendar for the annual review and the Document Control Register for version history.

15. Related documents and references

Related EduSmart controls	External references
M01 Training, Assessment, RPL, Credit Transfer & Validation Policy and Procedure M02 Student Information, Entry, Enrolment, Support & Withdrawal Policy and Procedure M04 Complaints & Appeals Policy and Procedure Student Handbook Current Course / Pre-Enrolment Information Enrolment Automation Compliance Calendar Document Control Register	National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Outcome Standards for Registered Training Organisations) Instrument 2025, Standard 2.1 National Vocational Education and Training Regulator (Compliance Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations and Fit and Proper Person Requirements) Instrument 2025, prepaid fee protection requirement (Compliance Standard 18) ASQA Information Practice Guide ASQA Accountability Practice Guide Australian Consumer Law

16. Approval

Approval field	Details
Approved by	
Position	
Date approved	
Effective date	
Next review date	