

2026



Australian Government

FEE-FREE Uni Ready Course Commonwealth supported place information

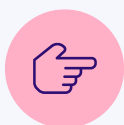
This booklet is about subsidised
university places for FEE-FREE Uni Ready courses.



Visit studyassist.gov.au
for up-to-date information

Published September 2025





You must read this booklet before submitting the **FEE-FREE Uni Ready course Electronic Commonwealth Assistance Form (eCAF)**.

When you submit your form, you are declaring you have read this booklet and you are aware of your obligations as a Commonwealth supported student.



If you do not submit your eCAF before the **Census date** your enrolment will be cancelled.

Make sure you know when your census date is – ask your higher education provider if you don't know.



The Department of Education has endeavoured to ensure that the information in this publication is consistent **Higher Education Support Act 2003 (the Act)** and guidelines made under the Act, available at www.legislation.gov.au.

However, there may be differences between this publication and the Act or guidelines. If there is any inconsistency, the Act will take precedence.

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Who is this booklet for?

This booklet is for eligible higher education students enrolling in a **FEE-FREE Uni Ready course Commonwealth supported place (CSP)**.

This booklet contains a summary of the key conditions of a CSP.

When you submit your **Electronic Commonwealth Assistance Form (eCAF)** you declare that you have read and understood the information contained in the eCAF and this booklet.

Using this booklet

Some pages in this booklet will have words **highlighted**. If you click on the highlighted word, it will take you to the glossary definition at the end of this booklet.

For further information

StudyAssist (www.StudyAssist.gov.au) is an Australian Government website managed by the Department of Education.

StudyAssist provides students with information about Commonwealth supported places and Government study loans.

StudyAssist will guide you through processes to support your study journey, including:

- accessing an **Electronic Commonwealth Assistance Form (eCAF)**
- how and when to withdraw from a course of study
- how to make a complaint.



All HELP student information booklets are available on the StudyAssist website at: <https://www.studyassist.gov.au/financial-and-study-support/help-publications>.

When to contact your provider

Contact your **Approved higher education provider (provider)** for any questions about:

- enrolment
- **Census date** and **Administrative date**
- the eligibility criteria for a **Commonwealth supported place (CSP)** and how to apply
- withdrawing from study
- how to make a complaint.

Overview of FEE-FREE Uni Ready course application process

1

Step 1

Identify a **FEE-FREE Uni Ready course** you would like to enrol in.

Check to see if you meet the eligibility criteria for a FEE-FREE Uni Ready course.

2

Step 2

Apply for your preferred FEE-FREE Uni Ready course(s) through your state or territory's Tertiary Admission Centre (TAC).

You may also be able to apply directly through your provider.

Review your enrolment offer(s) and check to see if you have been offered a place.

3

Step 3

Complete the relevant acceptance document for your provider.

To complete your enrolment, you will need to complete an **Electronic Commonwealth Assistance Form (eCAF)**.

Make note of how your provider will provide you with the eCAF- either via email or through your student portal.

4

Step 4

Keep an eye out for communication from your provider regarding your eCAF.

Contact your provider if you haven't received it by the date the provider had previously advised.

5

Step 5

Make sure you have the necessary information and documentation that will be required to complete the eCAF.

Importantly, check that you have a **Unique Student Identifier (USI)**.

6

Step 6

Review your eCAF.

Have you been offered a FEE-FREE Uni ready course place?

If you notice any incorrect information – even a small spelling mistake – go back to your provider immediately.

7

Step 7

Submit your completed eCAF before the census date.

Contents

Who is this booklet for?	3
Using this booklet	3
For further Information	3
When to contact your provider	3
Overview of FEE-FREE Uni Ready course application process	4
1. FEE-FREE Uni Ready Course Commonwealth supported place	6
1.1 What is a FEE-FREE Uni Ready course?	6
1.2 Where can I study in a FEE-FREE Uni Ready course?	6
1.3 Am I eligible for a place in a FEE-FREE Uni Ready course?	6
1.4 Does a FEE-FREE Uni Ready course affect my Student Learning Entitlement (SLE)?	6
1.5 How do I apply for a FEE-FREE Uni Ready course?	7
1.6 Who assesses your eligibility for a FEE-FREE Uni Ready course?	7
1.7 What if I make a mistake on my eCAF?	7
1.8 What will I be charged for? What do I owe?	7
1.9 How much is the student services and amenities fee?	8
1.10 When will I have to pay the student services and amenities fee?	8
2. Identity Requirements	8
2.1 Unique Student Identifier (USI)	8
2.2 What is my Unique Student Identifier (USI)?	9
2.3 Create or find your Unique Student Identifier (USI)	9
3. Withdrawing from study	9
4. Resources and contacts	10
4.1 Websites	10
4.2 Organisations	10
5. Glossary	12

1. FEE-FREE Uni Ready Course Commonwealth supported place

1.1 What is a FEE-FREE Uni Ready course?

FEE-FREE Uni Ready courses help students build the skills, experience and confidence they need to get into university.

A FEE-FREE Uni Ready course is a **Commonwealth supported place (CSP)**. The Australian Government pays your course fees on your behalf directly to your provider.

You will not be charged a tuition fee for your FEE-FREE Uni Ready course of study.

1.2 Where can I study in a FEE-FREE Uni Ready course?

FEE-FREE Uni Ready courses are available at participating public universities.

Check your preferred university's website to see if they offer FEE-FREE Uni Ready courses.

1.3 Am I eligible for a place in a FEE-FREE Uni Ready course?

To be eligible for a place in a FEE-FREE Uni Ready course you must be either:

- an Australian citizen who will complete some of your **Course of study** in Australia, or
- a New Zealand citizen or permanent visa holder who will be in Australia for the duration of your unit(s), or
- a **Pacific Engagement Visa holder (PEV)** who will be resident in Australia for the duration of your unit(s).



Being eligible for a FEE-FREE Uni Ready course does not mean you will be enrolled in one. You still have to be offered a place and meet your provider's entry requirements.

1.4 Does a FEE-FREE Uni Ready course affect my Student Learning Entitlement (SLE)?

No, accessing a FEE-FREE Uni Ready course of study does not affect your **Student Learning Entitlement (SLE)**.

1.5 How do I apply for a FEE-FREE Uni Ready course?

You may apply for a **FEE-FREE Uni Ready course** through the Tertiary Admissions Centre (TAC) in the state or territory where your university is located.

You may also be able to apply directly to your provider.

To accept an offer for a FEE-FREE Uni Ready course, you need to submit a valid FEE-FREE Uni Ready course **Electronic Commonwealth Assistance Form (eCAF)** to your provider on or before the **Census date** (or earlier **Administrative date**). Your provider will give you instructions on how to do this.

If you don't do this by the correct date your enrolment will be cancelled.

1.6 Who assesses your eligibility for a FEE-FREE Uni Ready course?

Your provider will assess whether you meet the eligibility requirements for a FEE-FREE Uni Ready course.



If you are not sure if you are eligible or need more information about the application process, please contact your provider.

1.7 What if I make a mistake on my eCAF?

If you realise you have made a mistake, you should correct it with your provider as soon as possible.

You only have 6 weeks after the **Census date** to correct any errors to ensure your FEE-FREE Uni Ready course is not affected.

This period is not an extension to the census date. You must meet the citizenship, residency and **Unique Student Identifier (USI)** requirements by the census date.

1.8 What will I be charged for? What do I owe?

If you are enrolled in a **FEE-FREE Uni Ready course**, you will not be required to pay any tuition fees. See Table 1 below.

Table 1: 2026 contributions for FEE-FREE Uni Ready courses

Funding cluster	Student contribution	Commonwealth Government contribution
FEE-FREE Uni Ready course	\$0	\$18,716

However, as a student at a public university, you can still be charged the **Student services and amenities fee**.

It is a fee that providers can charge students for services and amenities of a non-academic nature.

Providers can only spend revenue from the fee on specific services and amenities set out in the **Higher Education Support Act 2003 (the Act)**, such as sporting and recreational activities, employment and career advice, childcare, financial advice, and food services.

1.9 How much is the student services and amenities fee?

A provider can charge different groups of students different fee amounts.

If you are a full-time student in 2026, the maximum amount your provider can charge you for the year is \$373.

This amount is indexed each year.

1.10 When will I have to pay the student services and amenities fee?

You can either pay the fee upfront or use a **SA-HELP** loan.

Your provider will tell you the payment due date for the fee.

If you do not organise payment on or before your provider's **Student services and amenities fee payment due date**, your enrolment may be affected (e.g. your provider may not release your academic results to you or your library privileges may be affected).

If you receive a SA-HELP loan you will have a HELP debt that you will need to start repaying through the Australian tax system once you earn above the compulsory repayment threshold. This **HELP debt** will also grow over time due to indexation.



More information about the SA-HELP loan and the application process is available in the [2026 SA-HELP information booklet](#) on StudyAssist.

2. Identity Requirements

The Government uses unique reference identifiers to monitor and manage your use of Commonwealth assistance.

2.1 Unique Student Identifier (USI)

You will need a **Unique Student Identifier (USI)** to be eligible for a **FEE-FREE Uni Ready course**.

If you have studied before, your identifier may have previously been a **Commonwealth Higher Education Student Support Number (CHESSN)**.

The CHESSN has been replaced by the USI.

2.2 What is my Unique Student Identifier (USI)?

Your **Unique Student Identifier (USI)** is a 10-digit alpha-numeric identifier assigned to you and is unique for each student.

You must have a USI to be eligible for a FEE-FREE Uni Ready course and you must tell your provider your USI before the **Census date** for the unit of study.

Once you have a USI, it will be your primary education identifier.



You can log in to the [USI Student Portal](#) to update your details at any time.

2.3 Create or find your Unique Student Identifier (USI)

Creating a **Unique Student Identifier (USI)** is fast and free. Your USI is your education number for life and you only create it once. Using one form of [verifiable identification](#), you can create a USI at www.usi.gov.au.

If you have studied a vocational education and training (VET) course since 2015, including while at school, you will already have an existing USI. Don't create another one; find your existing USI.



More information on finding your USI online is available at:
www.usi.gov.au/students/find-your-usi.

The USI website provides self-service options to create or find your USI or update your personal details.

3. Withdrawing from study

You need to let your provider know if you no longer wish to study in your **FEE-FREE Uni Ready course**.

Each provider has their own process for withdrawing from a subject or course. Your provider's process will outline the forms to complete and how to submit your withdrawal request form.

To withdraw from a unit or course, you must complete your provider's formal withdrawal process on or before the **Census date**.

It is your responsibility to ensure you have withdrawn properly and to keep evidence of your withdrawal.

Your provider cannot set an **Administrative date** in relation to withdrawing from a unit or course.

4. Resources and contacts

4.1 Websites

Website	Information
StudyAssist www.studyassist.gov.au	StudyAssist is an Australian Government website managed by the Department of Education. StudyAssist helps you understand Government assistance including Commonwealth supported places (CSPs) and Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) study loans.
Course Seeker www.coursesseeker.edu.au	Course Seeker helps you compare undergraduate courses in Australia. You can shortlist up to four courses and compare them for things like cost, location, delivery mode and if you can get a CSP.
ComparED www.comparED.edu.au	ComparED helps you to compare the experience that other students had when studying a particular study area at a provider. You can search a field of study and choose four providers to compare combined feedback from actual students
myHELPbalance www.myHELPbalance.gov.au	myHELPbalance helps you monitor your loan information and keep track of your available HELP balance and Student Learning Entitlement (SLE).

4.2 Organisations

Organisation	What they can help with:	Contact details
Australian Taxation Office	The ATO can help you understand your HELP debt including indexation and compulsory, voluntary and overseas repayments. Viewing your loan accounts and information such as payment reference numbers.	13 28 61 If you are deaf or have a hearing or speech impairment, information on contacting the ATO through the National Relay Service is available at: Other services Australian Taxation Office. ATO website link to study support loans: https://www.ato.gov.au/individuals-and-families/study-and-training-support-loans.
Services Australia	Services Australia has payments to help support you while you do further tertiary study or training such as Youth Allowance, Austudy and ABSTUDY. They also administer Tertiary Access Payments and Student Start-up Loans.	Website: servicesaustralia.gov.au/education Payment finder: https://www.centrelink.gov.au/apps/clkonline_cof/payment-service-finder/payment-service-finder-start.
Department of Home Affairs	The Department of Home Affairs can help you with visas and Australian citizenship.	13 18 81 Website: www.homeaffairs.gov.au
Office of the Student Identifiers Registrar	Visit the USI website to create or find your USI.	1300 857 536 Website: www.usi.gov.au

5. Glossary

Administrative date

- A deadline set by your provider, which is earlier than the census date, for submitting forms or making upfront payments. Your provider must still allow you to submit your HELP application form on or before the census date. Your provider cannot set an administrative date in relation to withdrawing from a unit or course. Not all providers have an administrative date, and some may refer to this deadline as a payment due date, an invoice due date or a fees payment date.

Approved higher education provider (provider)

- In this booklet, this term means a university or other accredited higher education provider that has been approved by the Australian Government to offer CSPs and HECS-HELP loans to eligible students.

Census date

- This date is set by providers, and it is the legal deadline for various requirements, like making an upfront payment of your student contributions, applying for a HECS-HELP loan or formally withdrawing your enrolment so you are not charged tuition fees or incur a HELP debt.

Commonwealth Higher Education Student Support Number (CHESSN)

- This is a 10-digit number provided by the Australian Government, to students who were in receipt of a CSP or HELP loan between 2005 and 2020. From 2021, the CHESSN was replaced with the Unique Student Identifier (USI) for new students.

Commonwealth supported place (CSP)

- A place at a provider that is subsidised by the Australian Government. If you are enrolled in a CSP, you owe the 'student contribution' amount for your study and can pay this by making an upfront payment or using HECS-HELP to cover it, if you're eligible.

Course of study

- In this booklet, this term means a course leading to a higher education award, like a bachelor degree.

Electronic Commonwealth Assistance Form (eCAF)

- The form you must submit to your provider to request a HELP loan and/or accept an offer of a CSP.

Eligible former Permanent Humanitarian Visa holder

- a person who is:
 - not a permanent humanitarian visa holder
 - was previously a permanent humanitarian visa holder, and
 - is the holder of a visa of the subclasses 155 and 157 (Resident Return).This is a permanent visa. If you have questions about your visa, please contact the Department of Home Affairs.

FEE-FREE Uni Ready course

- A Commonwealth supported place where the Australian Government pays the course fees on your behalf directly to your provider. You will not be charged a tuition fee for your FEE-FREE Uni Ready course of study.

HELP debt

- The total of any HECS-HELP, FEE-HELP, VET Student Loans, OS-HELP, SA-HELP or STARTUP-HELP debts you have incurred. It will also include any applicable loan fees and any indexation that has been applied to your debt.

Higher Education Support Act 2003 (the Act)

- The Commonwealth legislation that outlines the requirements for getting a CSP and/or HELP loan.

New Zealand Special Category Visa holder (NZ SCV)

- If you arrived in Australia using a New Zealand passport, in the absence of another valid Australian visa, you will have automatically received a Special Category Visa (SCV) provided you met certain security, character and health requirements. It is a temporary visa that expires as soon as you leave Australia, but it remains in place for as long as you remain in Australia. From 29 June 2023, New Zealand citizens who formerly held a Special Category Visa and have transitioned to a permanent resident visa on the pathway to Australian citizenship will retain access to the Higher Education Loan Program, if they meet the residency requirements. If you have questions about your visa, please contact the Department of Home Affairs.

Permanent Humanitarian Visa holder

- A person who holds a permanent humanitarian visa under the Migration Regulations 1994.

Permanent humanitarian visas are currently made up of the visa subclasses:

- Refugee (subclass 200)
- In-country Special Humanitarian (subclass 201)
- Global Special Humanitarian (subclass 202)
- Emergency Rescue (subclass 203)
- Woman at Risk (subclass 204)
- Resolution of Status (subclass 851), and
- Protection (subclass 866).

This is a permanent visa. If you have questions about your visa, please contact the Department of Home Affairs.

Pacific Engagement Visa holder (PEV)

- A person who holds a Subclass 192 (Pacific Engagement) visa under the *Migration Regulations 1994*. This is a permanent resident visa for eligible individuals from participating countries across the Pacific and Timor-Leste. This is a permanent visa. If you have questions about your visa, please contact the Department of Home Affairs.

Request for a Commonwealth supported place in a FEE-FREE Uni Ready course form

- The official name of the form you must submit to your provider to accept an offer of a CSP. If you are eligible, you will also use this form to request a HECS-HELP loan. This form is usually completed online, as an eCAF.

SA-HELP

- The loan scheme you can use to pay your student services and amenities fee.

Student Learning Entitlement (SLE)

- The SLE is the amount of study you can undertake in a CSP in your lifetime. All students will start with 7 equivalent full time study load (EFTSL) of Commonwealth supported study. This is your SLE amount, with 7 EFTSL equating to 7 years of full-time study. From 1 January 2022, as you undertake study as a Commonwealth supported student, your SLE balance will reduce by the EFTSL value of the units you undertake. Any study in a CSP with a census date before 1 January 2022 will not reduce your SLE amount.

Student services and amenities fee

- This is a type of fee that your provider can charge you for specific student services and amenities of a non-academic nature.

Student services and amenities fee payment due date

- This date is set by providers and is the legal deadline for:
 - making an upfront payment of your student services and amenities fee,
 - applying for a SA-HELP loan, or
 - formally withdrawing your enrolment so you are not charged a student services and amenities fee or incur a SA-HELP debt.

Unique Student Identifier (USI)

- Your USI is a 10-digit alpha-numeric identifier assigned to you by the Student Identifiers Registrar under the *Student Identifiers Act 2014*. Your USI is used to connect your student loan information to your personal details. If you are starting a higher education course, you will need to have a USI by the census date and report it to your provider to get a HELP loan for your study. If you do not already have a USI, you can apply for one on the Unique Student Identifier website at www.usi.gov.au.