

Post School Study – how much does it really cost?

Most courses involve some cost. Costs vary from institution to institution and are usually related to the level and length of the course and the field of study. Contact the institution of your choice to ask about their fees and charges. If possible, compare these fees and charges with those charged by other institution before you make your decision.

You will need to find out how much you will pay for tuition fees, service fees and any additional costs.

TAFE Colleges

Most TAFE places are subsidised by the Australian, state or territory Governments. Tuition fees are calculated on an hourly basis, and the minimum and maximum amount that you will pay per year is set by the government. These amounts vary from state to state. A full-time TAFE student in a government-subsidised place will generally pay somewhere between \$600 and \$2000 per year.

Fees usually have to be paid up front (when you enrol), but you may be able to negotiate part-payment. Most TAFE institutes charge lower fees to eligible concession holders.

A small number of TAFE courses are not subsidised — these are known as ‘full-fee’ or ‘fee-for-service’ TAFE courses. Tuition fees for these courses are based on the actual cost of providing tuition, and concessions do not usually apply.

Contact your local TAFE institute or your state TAFE information line to find out more about TAFE tuition fees, concessions and payment arrangements.

Private Registered Training Organisations (RTOs)

Private Registered Training Organisations (RTOs) provide the same kind of certificates and diplomas as TAFE institutes, but are free to set their own tuition fees. Some RTOs are non-profit community organisations, and offer low-cost courses to particular groups, such as local residents or unemployed people.

Other RTOs are businesses with state-of-the-art equipment, and charge fees that reflect this.

Try to contact several RTOs that are offering the course that you are interested in, and compare their fees, facilities and student support services to see which one suits your needs best.

Higher Education Loan Help (HELP)

HELP includes HECS-HELP, FEE-HELP, OS-HELP and VET FEE-HELP. The HELP schemes provide income contingent loans to eligible higher education and vocational education students to assist them with their tuition costs.

HECS-HELP is available to higher education students enrolled in a Commonwealth supported place to pay their student contribution amount.

OS-HELP assists eligible Commonwealth supported higher education students with some of the costs associated with overseas study.

VET FEE-HELP assists eligible full fee-paying and certain state government subsidised vocational education and training (VET) students with the payment of their tuition fees. VET FEE-HELP is available to eligible students in a VET accredited diploma, advanced diploma, graduate certificate or graduate diploma course through RTOs approved to offer VET FEE-HELP to its students.

Additional costs

There are other costs associated with study, from pens and books to make-up kits or multimedia equipment, depending on your course. Ask your institution how much you will need to allow for:

- Textbooks and stationery
- Equipment, tools and/or uniforms (eg. some Australian Apprenticeships)
- Residential session or excursions
- Materials, such as art supplies, timber or photographic film and processing

A computer and internet access is another possible cost – will you need this set up at home or does the institution have a computer laboratory that you could use? You will also need to think about your accommodation and living expenses.

Last updated: September 2016