



Australian Government

Tuition Protection Service, Service Charter 2021

TPS Director's Foreword

The Tuition Protection Service (TPS) is an initiative of the Australian Government to assist and support students whose education providers are unable to complete the delivery of their course of study. While provider closures are rare, when a provider does stop delivering a course it can be a worrying and uncertain time for students. The TPS is here to provide information and assist affected students. The TPS provides assistance and support to:

- international students on student visas,
- domestic Vocational Education and Training (VET) students accessing a VET Student Loan (VSL),
- domestic higher education students accessing the Higher Education Loans Program (HELP) (FEE-HELP or HECS-HELP).
- domestic fee-paying students at private higher education providers

The TPS provides assists international students studying at around 1200 providers, and domestic students studying at around 380 providers.

This charter explains the standard of service you can expect from the TPS. We promote the value of fair, prompt, and equitable outcomes for students. We aim to provide a high standard of service to all our stakeholders. Your feedback is important. If you have a compliment, complaint, or a suggestion about something that could be improved, I look forward to hearing from you.

Melinda Hatton

TPS Director

Our Service Charter

This charter:

- sets out who we are and what we do
- outlines our service standards and what you can expect from us
- advises you how you can look after your own interests and help us
- advises you how to contact us, and
- advises you how to make a compliment, complaint or request a review.

What is the TPS and what does it do?

The TPS is a placement, refund and loan re-credit service for eligible students who are affected by a provider ceasing to deliver a course.

For international students on student visas, the TPS will help eligible students find another provider that offers a similar course so they can continue their studies. If a student is unable to be placed in a suitable replacement course, the TPS will refund unspent tuition fees.

For domestic VSL students, the TPS will help eligible students to find another VSL provider that offers a similar course so they can continue their studies. If a suitable replacement course is unavailable, we will arrange for a loan re-credit for commenced but not completed units.

For domestic HECS-HELP, FEE-HELP and up-front higher education fee paying students, the TPS will provide eligible students with the option to either transfer to a suitable replacement course, or receive a refund of tuition fees or loan re-credit for commenced but not completed.

The TPS Director, appointed by the Australian Government, is responsible for delivering the service and ensuring its sustainability.

Our Service Standards

For students

1. When your current provider closes or stops delivering your course, we will help find a suitable alternative provider, so you can continue your studies.
2. If you are an international student, and we cannot find a suitable alternative provider, we will refund your unspent tuition fees
3. If you are a VSL, HECS-HELP or FEE-HELP supported student and we are unable to find a suitable alternative provider, will arrange for your loan balance to be re-credited
4. If you are a domestic higher education student who has paid their tuition fees up-front, and we cannot find a suitable alternative provider, we will refund your tuition fees for units you have commenced but not completed
5. We recognise that international students and domestic loans students have different needs and requirements. You will be supported and receive TPS assistance, that is tailored to your sector.
6. We will treat you fairly and equitably. We value accessibility, choice, impartiality, integrity and professionalism in our decision-making and dealings with you.

For education providers

1. We will keep you informed about the TPS Levy arrangements and engage with you in the process to set the amount of the risk-rated premium and special tuition protection components of the TPS Levy annually.
2. If you have an issue regarding your obligations in a default situation and need information, we will work with you and provide advice and assistance as required.
3. We will work with you in a cooperative manner and offer you the opportunity to place students.

Communication Protocols

In our communications with students and providers, we aim to:

- be courteous and helpful
- respond promptly when you contact us
- acknowledge emails within three business days
- provide a detailed response within 10 business days
- provide an interim response to complex queries within 10 business days and tell you what we are doing to answer your query and how long we expect it will take
- provide clear and accurate information, and
- be sensitive, fair, and unbiased.

How will you know whether we have met our commitments to you?

We will be listening to your feedback and talking with those in the Australian education sector to monitor how well we are doing. The results will be used to regularly update and improve the way we deliver services to you.

Each year we will also publish the following information:

- the number of students assisted, and
- the number of refunds, payments and re-credits made from the respective tuition protection funds.

Looking after your interests – how you can help us to help you

If you are studying in Australia there are several things you need to do.

- Advise your education provider if any of your contact details change (email address and mobile phone etc.), as soon as possible. If your provider closes and you are eligible to access tuition protection assistance, we will use these contact details to contact you. If your contact details are out of date, it may be difficult for us to contact you.
- Make sure you have a written agreement (such as an eCAF if you are a domestic loan student) with your education provider and that you keep a copy of it. **You should keep up-to-date records of your course progression, including any statements of attainment and completed studies at each stage of your course.** This may help us to assist you more quickly if your provider closes.
- **Keep receipts for any tuition fees you have paid to your education provider or agent or any student loans you have incurred.** If you are an international or domestic higher education fee paying student and request a refund after your provider has closed, the receipts will help us to work out how much we can refund you. If you are a Commonwealth loans student, these receipts and records will help us work out the parts of the course for which you have incurred a loan.

For more information:

Visit tps.gov.au

Email administrator@a.tps.gov.au

Phone 1300 980 434

Outside Australia: +61 1300 980 434

Tuition Protection Service

GPO Box 9880

Canberra ACT 2601

To send feedback or request a review of a decision

If you have a compliment, complaint or a suggestion about how we can improve our service, please email the TPS Director at: operations@tps.gov.au

Internal review

If you are not satisfied with a decision made, you can ask the TPS Director to review the decision. You will need to set out in detail your reasons for seeking a review. We will acknowledge requests for a review within three business days and aim to provide a response within 10 business days. If the issue is difficult to resolve, we may need more time to provide a final response. In that case we will provide an interim response to inform you of our progress within 10 business days.

To contact the TPS Director:

Email operations@tps.gov.au

Write to: TPS Director, Tuition Protection Service,
GPO Box 9880, Canberra ACT 2601

External review

If you are not happy with the handling of a complaint or the outcome of a review by the TPS, you can raise the matter with the Commonwealth Ombudsman.

Visit ombudsman.gov.au to lodge an online complaint

Email ombudsman@ombudsman.gov.au

Phone: 1300 362 072 (9am-5pm Monday to Friday,
local call charge)

Write to: Commonwealth Ombudsman,
GPO Box 442,
Canberra ACT 2601 Australia