1. POLICY STATEMENT

1.1 Purpose/Intent:

South Metropolitan TAFE is committed to providing all staff, students and potential students with a working and learning environment which values diversity, respects differences and provides an environment that is safe, healthy, positive, supportive and free from all forms of harassment, bullying and discrimination.

1.2 Policy Objectives:

The objective of this policy is to ensure all students are treated fairly in accordance with the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA) and Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency Act 2011 (TEQSA Act).

1.3 Scope:

This policy applies to all South Metropolitan TAFE students and staff involved in VET FEE-HELP and/or FEE-HELP courses.

2. POLICY PRINCIPLES

2.1 Fair Treatment

South Metropolitan TAFE has a stated commitment to treating all students fairly and has selection processes that ensure all persons seeking to enrol who are or would be eligible for VET FEE-HELP or FEE-HELP are treated fairly.

The application of fair treatment does not require that all students are treated the same. Fairness is considered in the context of all the relevant circumstances. There will be situations in which the fair treatment of students may result in students in varying circumstances being treated differently, particularly with regard to VET FEE-HELP and FEE-HELP.

2.2 Application of merit including Admissions and Enrolment

The application of merit in decision-making processes involves South Metropolitan TAFE considering each application on a case by case basis and not applying inflexible policies that preclude eligible applicants from having their application considered.

As a VET and Higher Education Provider, South Metropolitan TAFE has open, fair and transparent procedures in accordance with the HESA and that in the Institute’s reasonable view, are based on merit for making decisions about:

a) the selection, from potential students who seek to enrol with the Institute; and,

b) the treatment of students undertaking a VET or HE course of study.

Admission and enrolment of students into a VET or HE course of study must be based on a clearly defined process of selection and/or merit based guidelines. Throughout the process of selection and admission, applicants are to be treated with fairness and courtesy, and kept informed of the progress of their application and enrolment.
2.3 No income test
South Metropolitan TAFE as a provider does not apply an income test when making decisions about which students are eligible for VET FEE-HELP or FEE-HELP assistance.

2.4 Educational disadvantage
When making decisions about the selection of students, South Metropolitan TAFE takes educational disadvantages that a particular student has experienced into account. As a provider, South Metropolitan TAFE does not use ‘proxy indicators’ of educational disadvantage in the absence of clear evidence that all students in such a group necessarily suffered educational disadvantage. Such proxy indicators should not be used because they assume that all people who satisfy the proxy condition (eg. being from a low income group or being from a rural area) have necessarily experienced educational disadvantage.

South Metropolitan TAFE will consider a student’s specific circumstances before making a decision about the student’s educational disadvantage.

2.5 Restricted access arrangement
When making decisions about the selection of students, South Metropolitan TAFE takes into account students that are enrolled under a restricted access arrangement [VET Provider Guidelines 5.10.5].

For avoidance of doubt, if it is necessary to provide a particular benefit to a student in order for that student to receive equal and fair treatment (for example a scholarship) then this policy does not prevent the Institute from providing the student that particular benefit.

All applicants must be provided a clear outline of the timeframe for VET course of study application deadlines, enrolment periods, and census dates for withdrawals.

2.6 Grievances
South Metropolitan TAFE’s VET and HE grievance procedures are accessible by students via the Institute’s website and student handbook, and for staff via the Quality Management System. The grievance procedures comply with the principles of fairness and outline the process for formal complaint lodgement, appointment of internal review officers and external review. The grievance procedures also provide for recommendations arising from any external review of decisions to be actioned by the Institute.

2.7 Tuition Assurance
South Metropolitan TAFE complies with the Tuition Assurance Requirements, under the provisions of the Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA) and Chapter 3 of the VET Provider Guidelines, which aims to protect students in the event that South Metropolitan TAFE ceases to provide a VET course of study in which a student is enrolled.

South Metropolitan TAFE has met the VET tuition assurance requirements as specified in the VET Provider Guidelines through its current membership of the TAFE Directors Australia (TDA) Tuition Assurance Scheme.

3. GUIDELINES (Optional)
3.1 N/A
4. RELATED DOCUMENTS

4.1 Governing Documents:

*Higher Education Support Act 2003 (HESA)* - [VET Provider Guidelines 2013](#)

VET Administration Information for Providers published by the Department of Education and Training

4.2 Related Policies:

Admissions Policy for VET FEE-HELP Enabled Courses

Higher Education Admission Enrolment and Fee Management Policy

VET FEE-HELP Grievance, Complaints and Appeals (Academic and Non-academic)

Tuition Fee Refund Policy for VET FEE-HELP Enabled Courses

Student Review Policy for Re-crediting a FEE-HELP balance for VET FEE-HELP Enabled Courses

4.3 Related Procedures and Forms:

Higher Education Application for Admission and Enrolment

Higher Education Director’s Recommendation Remission of Debt

Higher Education Application for Refund Withdrawal

4.4 Supporting/Related Documents:

N/A

5. ACCOUNTABILITIES

Monitoring and Evaluation:

Director, Client Services

Director, Quality and Development

6. DEFINITIONS

**Census Date** - The last day a student may withdraw from a VET Course of Study in which they are enrolled without incurring liability for tuition fees.

**HESA** - *Higher Education Support Act 2003*

**Potential Students** refers to all persons seeking to enrol in a VET unit of study that meets the course requirements under subclause 45(1) of Schedule 1A of the Act and who are, or would be, entitled to VET FEE-HELP assistance under clause 43 of Schedule 1A of the Act.

**Restricted access arrangement** - An agreement entered into between South Metropolitan TAFE and an employer or industry body for the provision of a course(s) or places in a course(s) in which enrolment is limited or restricted to employees of the employer or industry body. [HESA Schedule 1]

**Student/s** refers to all persons enrolled in a unit of study who are, or would be entitled to VET FEE-HELP assistance under clause 43 of Schedule 1A of the Act.
7. POLICY APPROVAL

Approved and Endorsed: Managing Director  Date: 11 April 2016
### DOCUMENT HISTORY AND VERSION CONTROL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Version</th>
<th>Date Approved</th>
<th>Approved by</th>
<th>Brief Description</th>
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<td>V1</td>
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