

# Tuition Fees Protection Policy

## Purpose

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The purpose of this policy to ensure all student tuition fees paid in advance to Australian School of Business and Trade (ASBT) are made by the ESOS Act 2000 and the Tuition Protection Service (TPS).

## Statement

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1. The TPS is a government initiative introduced in 2012 that incorporates several requirements on education providers delivering courses to international students. Through changes to the ESOS Act, the TPS further strengthens protection for international students
2. The principal purpose of TPS is to assist international students in the event a provider is unable to deliver their course of study. This instrument enables students to either:
  - 2.1 complete their studies in another course or with another education provider, or
  - 2.2 receive a refund of unspent tuition fees

The TPS incorporates the following:

3. Australian School of Business and Trade (ASBT) lists all tuition fees payable by the student for the course (Refer Fee Schedule), the periods to which those tuition fees relate and payment options (including, if permitted under the ESOS Act, that the student may choose to pay more than 50 per cent of their tuition fees before their course commences).
4. The college will provide details of any non-tuition fees the student may incur, including as a result of having their study outcomes reassessed, deferral of study, fees for late payment of tuition fees, or other circumstances in which additional fees may apply.
5. The college includes in the written agreement the following information, which is to be consistent with the requirements of the ESOS Act, about refunds of tuition fees and non-tuition fees in the case of student default and provider default:
6. amounts that may or may not be repaid to the overseas student (including any tuition and non-tuition fees collected by education agents on behalf of the registered provider)
7. processes for claiming a refund
8. the specified person(s), other than the overseas student, who can receive a refund in respect of the overseas student identified in the written agreement, consistent with the ESOS Act
9. a plain English explanation of what happens in the event of a course not being delivered, including the role of the TPS
10. a statement that "This written agreement, and the right to make complaints and seek appeals of decisions and action under various processes, does not affect the rights of the student to take action under the Australian Consumer Law if the Australian Consumer Law applies".

11. There is no requirement to set out the length of study periods or the tuition fees that apply to study periods in ongoing invoices and billing cycles. As there are no longer restrictions on the collection of further tuition fees after the student commences, as agreed initially on a payment plan with students setting out when any remaining fees are due to be paid once the student starts their course.
12. Fees to be paid are set out and agreed to by each student in their written agreement with the provider. When entering into a written agreement, it is set out what period payment of tuition fees relates to. Refunds paid under section 47E of the ESOS Act are calculated under the Education Services for Overseas Students (Calculation of Refund) Specification 2014, which involves working out how many weeks are in a default period and the associated tuition fee.
13. Under the ESOS legislation, Australian School of Business and Trade (ASBT) will not require students to pay more than 50 per cent of their tuition fees before they start the course. However, students, or the person responsible for paying the tuition fees, may choose to pay more than 50 per cent of their tuition fees before they start their course.
14. Students will need to highlight clearly on the application form if they wish to exercise the choice to pay more than 50% of the tuition fees upfront.
15. Short courses with a duration of 25 weeks or less are not subject to the 50 per cent limit. There are no restrictions on collecting tuition fees after a student has started their course.
16. These requirements support the TPS by:
  - ensuring providers are better able to meet their refund obligations to students
  - improving outcomes for students affected by a provider default
  - encouraging providers to establish sustainable business models
  - reducing the potential refund liability on the TPS
  - facilitating the student visa application assessment process.
17. Students and their sponsors can choose to pay more than 50 per cent of tuition fees upfront if they wish to do so. This allows students and those paying fees on their behalf, such as their parents or a scholarship sponsor, to pay any amount greater than 50 per cent of the tuition fees to take advantage of favorable exchange rates or have the convenience of only paying once. Students can now work out a more flexible payment plan with their provider. Previously students could not start paying their remaining fees until two weeks before the start of the second study period. This restriction is now removed.
18. The pre-paid fees collected by Australian School of Business and Trade (ASBT) will be maintained in a dedicated account and will not be drawn until the student commences
19. Record-keeping obligations are strengthened. These are noted about notification of change of contact details, letter of offer, refund policy, application form, Coe's and written agreement. Due diligence checks are made on all records kept, including accounts. The Change of contact details policy states the processes used by Australian School of Business and Trade (ASBT) to ensure that due diligence is conducted into this requirement.

20. In the unlikely event, Australian School of Business and Trade (ASBT) is unable to deliver a course a student has paid for and is unable to either offer an alternative course or pay the student a refund of the unspent prepaid tuition fees, the TPS will assist in finding an alternative course or to get a refund if a suitable alternative is not found.
21. Australian School of Business and Trade (ASBT) will ensure the requirements of TPS are adhered through:

**Induction of relevant staff:**

Administration and accounts staff will receive induction into the requirements of the ESOS Act and the TPS through induction processes so that they are familiar with their roles and requirements for fees collection and record keeping

**Reconcile advance fee collected before every fortnight:**

All the student tuition fees will be received in the Client fee account. This account is reconciled with PRISMS. Advance tuition fee balance at the end of each month by admissions team.

Upon commencement of every student the fee amount (earned revenue) for the students who are marked as commenced on PRISMS (which will only occur once they arrive and attend the Orientation session at Australian School of Business and Trade (ASBT) campus); the fee for the respective term will be calculated and equivalent **amount ONLY** for the realised revenue will be transferred to the Australian School of Business and Trade (ASBT)'s everyday account to run the operations of college. Any shortfalls to meet the ongoing working capital costs will be met via transfer from the Savings account.

This process will be managed by accounts teams to ensure compliance and independent implementation of the systems. External accountant will receive a confirmation from the admissions team; confirming the students who have successfully commenced the course at Australian School of Business and Trade (ASBT). This report will also include the Approved and Visa granted COE's for future as well from Australian School of Business and Trade (ASBT)'s PRISMS database. Based on the commencement confirmation accounts team will reconcile the fee for the term as realised revenue and send a notification to CEO to transfer the funds into Australian School of Business and Trade (ASBT)'s everyday Account accordingly. Only after receiving the confirmation from admissions team/ accounts CEO will transfer the approved funds to Australian School of Business and Trade (ASBT)'s everyday Account.

**Allocated roles and responsibilities of PEO**

PEO is responsible to action the transfer of funds from Client Fee Account to Business Operations Account. PEO will only initiate the transfer between these accounts once he receives a confirmation from the admissions team and the bookkeeper.

PEO has the overall responsibility for implementation of this policy across all departments of Australian School of Business and Trade (ASBT).

## Internal audits

An external independent accountant will conduct an internal audit at the end of financial year. Scope of this internal audit to ensure all student tuition fees paid in advance to Australian School of Business and Trade (ASBT) are made by the ESOS Act 2000 and the Tuition Protection Service (TPS).

### Other assurance actions

- Regular checks of the TPS website for updates.
- Ensure annual TPS levy is paid on time
- Compliant written agreements
- Compliant refund policy

