

LOWER FEES, LOCAL SKILLS FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Here we have provided answers to some frequently asked questions about the *Lower fees, local skills* half price course fees and the annual course fees cap.

If the answer you're looking for isn't here, please contact your local Jobs and Skills Centre on 13 64 64 or find your local centre (<https://www.jobsandskills.wa.gov.au/jobs-and-skills-centres>) and visit.

When will the half price course fees be available?

The half price course fees through *Lower fees, local skills* will be for courses that commence from 1 January 2020, for the qualifications on the list.

Any units of competency commenced by new or continuing students in the selected qualifications between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2021 will attract the half price course fee. Any units of competency commenced outside of this period will attract the regular course fees.

What is a unit of competency?

A VET course or qualification consists of individual units of competency, each of which has a set number of "nominal hours" ie the indicative hours required to deliver and assess the unit. Course fees are determined by multiplying the applicable rate by the nominal hours for each unit in the course that you enrol in.

Some people choose to complete individual units, to pick up specific skills when they need to. For example, you may work as a fitter and machinist but you want to move into plant mechanics — you could select some units from the *Certificate III in Engineering Plant Mechanic* course to upskill.

What if I am already enrolled in a course and continuing to study in 2020?

If you have already started one of these qualifications, and will be continuing it in 2020, you will pay the half price course fees for any units of competency in that qualification that you commence from 1 January 2020.

Are the half price course fees available if I study part time? Or are they only for full time study?

The half price course fees apply whether you study full time, part time or even online for these priority qualifications.

The half price course fee rates and annual fee caps will also be available for units of competency that are commenced between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2021, that form part of a targeted priority qualification.

Am I eligible for the concession rate on the half price course fees?

The following people will be entitled to a concession rate on the half price course fees.

- Persons and dependents of persons holding:
 - a pensioner concession card;
 - a repatriation health benefits card issued by the Department of Veterans' Affairs;
 - or
 - a Health Care Card
- Persons and dependents of persons in receipt of the Youth Allowance, AUSTUDY or ABSTUDY
- Persons and dependents of persons who are inmates of a custodial institution
- Secondary school-aged persons, not enrolled at school

Do I still have to pay other fees, like resources? And if so, are these also reduced?

The half price rates apply **only** to course fees, and these are set by the Department of Training and Workforce Development's *VET fees and charges policy*.

Yes, you may need to pay other fees — that will depend on the qualification you choose. For example; if you do the *Certificate III in Commercial Cookery*, you may need to pay for specialist recipe ingredients as part of your course. Your training provider will be able to provide details of any such fees that apply to your course.

More information about fees and charges for VET courses is available here:

<https://www.jobsandskills.wa.gov.au/training/choosing-training-course#fees-and-charges>

Can I still access VET student loans, with these half price qualifications?

No, the Australian Government does not offer VET Student Loans (VSL) for these half price qualifications because they are at Certificate IV level and below and therefore do not qualify for VSL which is available only for courses at Diploma or Advanced Diploma level.

What are VET student loans?

Eligible students can apply to get a loan to pay for their fees through the Australian Government's *VET Student Loans* scheme (VSL). Under this scheme, once you're employed and your income exceeds a set level, you start repaying the loan through the tax system. For more information contact your training provider, visit <https://www.education.gov.au/vet-student-loans> or contact the student hotline on 1800 020 108.

Do I have to do full qualification or course, or can I just do individual units of competency?

You can do either, and still be eligible for the half price course fee rates and annual course fee caps. The half price course fee rates and fee caps will be available for units of competency commenced between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2021 that form part of the priority qualifications.

What is a unit of competency?

A VET course or qualification consists of individual units of competency, each of which has a set number of "nominal hours" ie the hours required to deliver and assess the unit. Course fees are determined by multiplying the applicable rate by the nominal hours for each unit in the course that you enrol in.

Some people choose to complete individual units, to pick up specific skills when they need to. For example, you may work as a fitter and machinist but you want to move into plant mechanics — you could select some units from the *Certificate III in Engineering Plant Mechanic* course, to upskill.

The Department of Training and Workforce Development's *VET fees and charges policy*- external site <https://www.dtwd.wa.gov.au/about-us#policy> standardises course fees for all training providers in Western Australia.

How does the annual course fees cap work, and what are the actual fees cap amounts?

The "fees cap" means that regardless of how much your course fees actually are, you will not pay more than a certain amount in any one calendar year.

Course fee caps are set at different amounts, depending on the level of qualification and whether you are entitled to receive a concession rate or are aged between 15—24.

- The annual concession rate course fee cap for Certificate II, III and IV qualifications is \$400.
- The annual non-concession rate course fee cap for Certificate II, III and IV level qualifications is \$1,200,

All students aged 15—24 years of age are eligible for the annual concession fee cap of \$400 per qualification/course per year.

Is the fee cap just for one qualification or course, or can I do two in the same year under the one fee cap?

The annual course fee caps are applied **at qualification/course level** for the calendar year. For example; if you are a concession student and you complete two courses in one year, the course fees will be capped at \$400 in that year **for each course**.

If I turn 25 years old during my qualification or course, am I still eligible for the \$400 annual course fee cap?

The \$400 course fee cap applies to units of competency that are commenced in a calendar year by concession students, and by people aged between 15 and 24 years.

If your 25th birthday occurs during the year, any units that you commence prior to the end of that year will still be eligible for the annual course fee cap of \$400 for that year.

If you are turning 25 during your course, please speak to your training provider to check what course fees and/or price caps will apply.

Are apprenticeships and traineeships included for the half price fees and fee caps?

Yes, some of the qualifications on the list for *Lower fees, local skills* are available as an apprenticeship or traineeship, which means as an apprentice or trainee your employer would be eligible for the half price course fees and annual course fee caps. This will be noted in the information available in the list of qualifications, or check with the training provider.

Please note that because all of the units of competency in your apprenticeship or traineeship may not have started by 31 December 2021 — when this program of half price fees and the annual fee cap ends — it could be the case that some parts of your course won't be eligible for the half price course fees and annual fee cap.

As this could be quite complex — depending on when your apprenticeship or traineeship commences and its duration — please speak to your Australian Apprenticeship Support Network (AASN) provider, or your training provider, for further information.

What happens if I start a two or three year qualification, which continues past 31 December 2021?

The half price course fee rates, and the annual course fee cap, apply **only** to units of competency within a course or qualification that you commence between 1 January 2020 and 31 December 2021. Any units of competency commenced outside of this period will attract the regular course fees.

What if I start a qualification, but can't continue it?

If you re-commence units that form part of one of the listed priority qualifications between 1 January 2020 to 31 December 2021, you will be eligible for the half price course fee rates and fee caps.

If you have to withdraw from the course, you are entitled to a refund of the course fee and 50% of the resource fee for units that you withdraw from, before the unit withdrawal date (which is set by your training provider). Please check with your training provider for information about refunds.



Can I choose between training providers I like?

Yes — these qualifications are available at both Western Australian TAFE colleges and private training providers that are contracted by the Department of Training and Workforce Development to deliver them.

The list of *Lower fees, local skills* qualifications available here includes information about which training providers are offering each of the courses. Please note that availability for all courses is subject to an available training place.

For more information, <https://www.jobsandskills.wa.gov.au/lowerfees#i-what-qualifications-are-half-price>