



Tertiary Education
Commission
Te Amorangi Mātauranga Matua

Fees Free Starter Pack for TEOs

Provider-based study 2024



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Introduction

Fees Free Tertiary Education and Training was introduced on 1 January 2018 for first-time tertiary students or trainees in their first year of provider-based study, or first two years of work-based learning.

The policy supports the Government's commitment to make tertiary education and training affordable for all by:

- a. improving affordability and reducing debt levels
- b. expanding access and participation, especially for those who have not previously studied or those for whom finance has been a real barrier to participation
- c. supporting lifelong learning
- d. ensuring the benefits of tertiary education for New Zealanders, including residents with an ongoing commitment to New Zealand, are shared through a highly skilled population contributing to a strong society and thriving economy.

As a tertiary education organisation (TEO), you have a part to play in ensuring your eligible learners can access their Fees Free entitlement while enrolled at your organisation. You'll need to:

- **check the Fees Free eligibility** of your enrolled learners
- **report eligible learners** who are enrolled in eligible courses to us each month
- **accept payments** made to you from TEC on behalf of eligible learners, and
- **support your learners** in understanding their eligibility and entitlement to Fees Free.

This guide is to help you understand the Fees Free policy and aid you in supporting your Fees Free eligible learners. It covers the key points of the process and shows you where to find more information.

If you need further support at any time, please contact your Relationship Manager or the Customer Contact Group at customerservice@tec.govt.nz or 0800 601 301.

Getting started

To get started, there are a few things you should check.

Has your organisation signed your Fees Free agreement?

You will receive an annual Fees Free agreement from the TEC. It will be uploaded to Workspace 2, and the lead contact for your organisation will need to sign it and return it to us before we can make any payments for the calendar year.

If you do not have a Fees Free agreement on Workspace 2, [contact us](#) for help.

Do we have your contact details?

If you will be filling in Fees Free reports for your organisation, please [contact us](#) to confirm we have added you as a Data Return contact for your organisation. This will ensure you receive any communications we send about Fees Free.

We also encourage you to [sign up for our monthly newsletter, 'Fees Free Focus'](#), which keeps you up to date with important changes, and helpful tips for Fees Free reporting.

Eligibility

To receive Fees Free, a learner must meet the learner eligibility criteria for Fees Free, and must be enrolled in an [eligible course or programme](#).

We (the TEC) determine the [Fees Free eligibility status](#) of each learner. You need to [check the eligibility statuses](#) of learners enrolled at your organisation, and [report the eligible enrolments](#) to us.

2024 learner eligibility criteria

Below is the eligibility criteria for the 2024 calendar year. Learners starting study in 2024 must meet this criteria to be eligible for Fees Free. For provider-based study, there are residency criteria and prior study and training criteria.

Learner residency criteria

To be eligible for Fees Free in **provider-based** tertiary education in 2024 a learner must be one of the following:

1. a New Zealand citizen, or
2. a holder of a residence class visa and:
 - a. ordinarily resident in New Zealand and have held a residence class visa for at least three years while living in New Zealand; or
 - b. a person granted refugee or protected person status, or a family member granted a residence visa with the person granted refugee or protected person status; or sponsored into New Zealand by someone in their family who, at the time of sponsorship, was a refugee or protected person; or
3. a person granted refugee or protected person status prior to gaining a residence visa; or
4. an immediate family member, without a residence visa and residing in New Zealand, of a person granted refugee or protected person status, as defined as:
 - a. the partner and any child in New Zealand, of a person granted refugee or protected person status prior to gaining a residence visa; or
 - b. the parent and any sibling in New Zealand, of a person granted refugee or protected person status prior to gaining a residence visa, who is a dependent child; or
5. a holder of the Christchurch Response (2019) Permanent Resident Visa; or
 - b. a holder of a residence class visa who would have been eligible for the Christchurch Response (2019) Permanent Resident Visa; or

6. a holder of a residence class visa who is a family member of a living person, where that living person is:
 - a. the holder of a Christchurch Response Visa residing in or outside of New Zealand; or
 - b. a New Zealand citizen residing in or outside of New Zealand, who:
 - i. was a resident visa holder under the Immigration Act 2009 on 15 March 2019 and was eligible for a Christchurch Response Visa; or
 - ii. would have been eligible for a Christchurch Response Visa had they not already been the holder of a permanent resident visa under the Immigration Act 2009 on 15 March 2019; or
 - iii. would have been eligible for a Christchurch Response Visa had they not already been a New Zealand citizen on 15 March 2019; or
 - iv. was granted New Zealand citizenship after holding a Christchurch Response Visa; or
 - c. the holder of a permanent resident visa under the Immigration Act 2009 residing in or outside of New Zealand, who:
 - i. was a resident visa holder under the Immigration Act 2009 on 15 March 2019 and was eligible for a Christchurch Response Visa; or
 - ii. would have been eligible for a Christchurch Response Visa had they not already been the holder of a permanent resident visa under the Immigration Act 2009 or on 15 March 2019; or
 - d. is the holder of a resident visa under the Immigration Act 2009 residing in or outside of New Zealand, who held the resident visa on 15 March 2019 and who was eligible for a Christchurch Response Visa; or
7. a holder of the Afghan Emergency Resettlement Resident Visa.

Learner prior study and training criteria

To be eligible for Fees Free for **provider-based** tertiary education, a learner must also have either:

- a. been enrolled in a school in or after 2022 other than as an adult learner; or
- b. not undertaken more than half a year of equivalent full-time tertiary education (0.5 equivalent full-time student (EFTS) units or 60 credits) at Level 3 or above on the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework (NZQCF), including tertiary education at an equivalent level undertaken in any country.

The following credits must not be included in measures of prior tertiary education to determine eligibility for Fees Free:

- a. any tertiary education undertaken while enrolled in school prior to 1 January 2019 (except for tertiary education undertaken as an adult student); and
- b. any tertiary courses undertaken as part of the learner's school learning programme or secondary-tertiary programme on or after 1 January 2019; and
- c. any credits achieved as part of any industry training programme that consists of fewer than 120 credits that are reported after 1 January 2018.
- d. any courses or credentials funded by the TEC undertaken after 1 January 2023 that had zero tuition fees and zero compulsory course costs.

- e. tertiary education undertaken as part of the [Targeted Training and Apprenticeships Fund \(TTAF\)](#).
- f. tertiary education undertaken through the [Youth Guarantee](#) programme after 1 July 2020.
- g. tertiary education undertaken through the [Māori and Pasifika Trades Training](#) programme after 1 July 2020.
- h. tertiary education undertaken through the [Refugee English Fund](#).

[Learn more about prior study and training.](#)

2024 course eligibility criteria

This is the eligibility criteria for the 2024 calendar year. Courses starting in 2024 must meet this criteria to be eligible for Fees Free. You only report enrolments in courses that meet these criteria.

Course eligibility criteria

An eligible course for provider-based tertiary education is a course that is:

- a. funded by the TEC from either:
 - i. the Delivery at Levels 3–7 (non-degree) on the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework and all industry training Fund, excluding provision that would previously have been funded through the Industry Training Fund, or
 - ii. the Delivery at Levels 7 (degree) and above on the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework Fund, or
 - iii. grants under section S556 of the Education and Training Act 2020 for tertiary provision towards a qualification on the New Zealand Qualifications and Credentials Framework (NZQCF) at Level 3 or above, or a micro-credential at Level 3 or above approved by the New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA), and
- b. not part of a school learning programme or secondary-tertiary programme.

Some courses are not covered under Fees Free where the fees are already met under another TEC funding arrangement, such as Māori and Pasifika Trades Training, or the Refugee English Fund.

Courses paid for by employers and courses paid for through a scholarship are eligible for Fees Free if they meet the criteria above, and should be included in Fees Free reporting as eligible courses.

Eligibility criteria for other years

Since Fees Free started, there have been several changes to both the learner eligibility criteria and the course eligibility criteria. It's important to look at the criteria for the calendar year in which the learner started their eligible study or training.

If you're interested in finding out about the Fees Free eligibility criteria for a previous year, [contact us](#) and we'll help you out.

Eligibility statuses

There are three possible eligibility statuses for learners. They may have different statuses for provider-based study and work-based learning, as well as for different years.

Status	Code	Meaning
No	N	The learner does not meet the eligibility criteria and cannot receive Fees Free. Learners can query this status by asking us for a review, and can then appeal if they disagree with the information we hold.
Unknown	U	Also known as 'Maybe'. The TEC does not have enough information to determine the learner's eligibility status. The learner should check the eligibility criteria and, if they meet the criteria, they can submit a statutory declaration to the TEC to confirm that they are eligible.
Yes	Y	The learner meets the learner eligibility criteria for Fees Free. Either the TEC had enough information to automatically make the learner eligible, or the learner has submitted a statutory declaration which has been used to change their status to Yes. Eligible learners need to be reported to the TEC when they enrol in eligible study.
Starter	8, 9, 0, 1, 2, or 3	The learner is eligible for Fees Free, and started to use their Fees Free entitlement in the year indicated. This is considered an eligible status, because the learner may still have entitlement remaining. Eligible learners that have remaining entitlement need to be reported to the TEC when they enrol in eligible study. → 2018 Starter (8) → 2019 Starter (9) → 2020 Starter (0) → 2021 Starter (1) → 2022 Starter (2) → 2023 Starter (3)

How to check learner eligibility

Eligibility statuses can change daily based on statutory declarations, eligibility appeals, and other information submitted to the TEC. It's important to check the eligibility status of your learners regularly, so you can [report the eligible enrolments to us](#).

There are several ways for you to check your learners' eligibility status.

Fees Free website

The [Fees Free website](#), while mainly used by learners, can be used by TEOs to check the eligibility of a learner. The website is updated daily.

Workspace 2

The Workspace 2 home page has a 'Shared Documents' section. Here, you'll find several *Fees Free Eligibility* CSV files. These list all eligible learners (those with a 'Yes' or 'Starter' status) that have remaining Fees Free entitlement, for each calendar year. These are the learners you will need to report for Fees Free. If a learner is not on this list then they are either ineligible for Fees Free, their status is 'Unknown', or they are eligible but have already used their full entitlement in a previous year.

There is a different file for each calendar year. Please check a learner's eligibility status for the same year as the enrolments you are reporting.

All files are updated daily.

Email

For large volumes of learners, you may wish to send a CSV file to customerservice@tec.govt.nz containing a list of National Student Numbers (NSNs) enrolled with your organisation in the current calendar year. We'll return this file to you with the learners' eligibility statuses within two business days.

This lets us give you the status of every learner enrolled with your organisation, regardless of whether the learner is eligible or not.

What to do if a learner disagrees with their eligibility status

Learners with a 'No' status who want to understand why they are ineligible can request an eligibility review. They can do this by entering their NSN and filling out the web-form on the [Fees Free website](#). If they believe they meet the Fees Free eligibility criteria and disagree with the information TEC holds, they can appeal their eligibility. We will assess the evidence they provide and may change their eligibility status if their appeal is approved.

What to do if you have information that challenges a learner's eligibility status

In accordance with our Fees Free agreement, you must immediately notify us if you become aware of information that indicates an eligible student should not have been determined by us to be eligible. To submit these learners for review, use the 'Fees Free TEO Change Learner Eligibility Status' report on Workspace 2. You can do this at any time.

We will reassess the learner's eligibility based on the evidence you provide. If we cannot reach a decision we may contact you for more information or request copies of certificates for an in-depth assessment.

If we determine that a learner does not meet the eligibility criteria for Fees Free we will notify the learner and advise that they may now be charged by their TEO, as their eligibility has been overturned. We will inform you of the outcome by an email addressed to the contact you specified in the report.

Entitlement

A learner's entitlement is the amount of Fees Free they have available to them, once we've determined that they are eligible. The TEC will keep track of a learner's entitlement use, and let you know how much of each learner's fees we can cover, via the [monthly reporting process](#).

What Fees Free covers

In a learner's first calendar year of study they can get up to \$12,000 (including GST) for any [Fees Free eligible study](#). There is no equivalent full-time student (EFTS) or credit cap in the first calendar year. Learners who undertake less than 1 EFTS and use less than \$12,000 of Fees Free in their first calendar year of study can carry over their remaining Fees Free entitlement (in dollars and EFTS) into the following calendar year. Below is more information on how carryover works for Fees Free study.

Learners can be enrolled in multiple programmes, qualifications, or TEOs while using their Fees Free entitlement. A learner using their entitlement in both provider-based study and work-based learning will use their entitlement in months, as well as EFTS and dollars.

Not all fees are covered by Fees Free, though most compulsory fees are. For eligible provider-based study, Fees Free covers:

- compulsory tuition fees
- compulsory course costs that are charged to all students enrolled in a course, which include (but are not limited to):
 - any compulsory costs associated with an enrolment
 - examinations (including reporting of credits to the NZQA)
 - field trips, and
 - any compulsory purchase of equipment or books through the TEO, and
- student services fees.

Learners need to cover any administrative fees or charges for additional services that are payable as a result of their specific circumstances, such as student association and club memberships, late fees, reassessment of exam results, examination relocation fees, and fees associated with recognition of prior learning.

This aligns Fees Free coverage with current fee regulation and courses currently covered by the Student Loan Scheme.

How carryover works for provider-based study

There is no equivalent full-time student (EFTS) or credit cap in a learner's first year of provider-based study. At the end of each calendar year, we assess how much Fees Free each learner has used and determine whether they have remaining entitlement to carry over into future calendar years.

This is so learners who start their study part way through the year or study part time are not disadvantaged and can still receive a full year Fees Free.

A learner must have undertaken less than 1 EFTS (120 credits) and used less than \$12,000 of Fees Free in their first calendar year of study to continue to receive Fees Free in the following year. Once they have used 1 EFTS or \$12,000 (including GST), their entitlement stops.

Calculating carryover entitlement

When entitlement runs across more than one calendar year it is calculated in both dollars and EFTS. The learner's Fees Free entitlement is limited to the lesser of \$12,000 or 1 EFTS, so we must monitor and recalculate the learner's entitlement use to determine the correct Fees Free allocation to be paid to the TEO.

We do this by determining the average dollar per EFTS rate for the learner (by each TEO), plus validated student services fees. [Read more about the carryover entitlement calculation.](#)

We'll let you know when a learner has used their full entitlement in the '[Multiple Providers and Cap Limit](#)' report.

Learners undertaking both provider-based study and work-based learning

Learners may undertake both provider-based study and work-based learning, or may change between modes during their tertiary journey. Where a learner is enrolled in both modes, they use their entitlement in EFTS, months and dollars.

We will consider the learner to have used their full Fees Free entitlement when they reach:

- 1 EFTS of provider-based study, and/or
- 24 months of work-based learning, and/or
- \$12,000 (including GST) across all study and training.

How to check how much entitlement a learner has used

TEOs can access up-to-date information on how much Fees Free entitlement a learner has used in EFTS, months and dollars. This is to help you when giving financial advice to your enrolled learners and to help your learners in their decision-making.

You can find the Fees Free Entitlement Use file in the Shared Documents on Workspace 2. The file is updated monthly based on the enrolments and fees reported to us by TEOs each month.

It's important to note that:

- A learner's entitlement use may differ from the amount we have paid to you, due to enrolments with other TEOs, or exceptional circumstances specific to the learner.
- You should continue to report the full EFTS and/or dollars charged to learners in your Fees Free returns, including when the learner does not have enough entitlement to cover the whole amount. We will continue to calculate the allocation due to you for the learner and inform you of our payment via the '[Multiple Providers and Cap Limit](#)' report and/or Work-based Remittance.

Sharing entitlement information with learners

You may choose to share this information with your learners. Please be mindful of privacy and confidentiality requirements if you do. We recommend you use the text below to give learners their entitlement use information:

TEC records show that you have used **\$X.XX, X.XXXX** EFTS and **XX** months of your Fees Free entitlement.

If you have used less than \$12,000, 1 EFTS and 24 months, you can carry forward your remaining Fees Free entitlement. Your entitlement will stop when you have used your remaining dollars or have reached 1 EFTS or 24 months – whichever you use first.

The enrolment and study information we hold is current as at **XX Month 20XX**. If there has been any change to your enrolment after this date, the information may not be an up-to-date or accurate record of the Fees Free entitlement you have used.

You can find more information on Fees Free entitlement at [FeesFree.govt.nz](https://feesfree.govt.nz).

If you believe this information is incorrect and you would like to request a review of your entitlement use, please email customerservice@tec.govt.nz with your National Student Number, name, date of birth, and the reason for your request.

Reporting provider-based study

As with other funds, you're required to report your Fees Free eligible enrolments to us so that we can monitor Fees Free entitlement use, and calculate the allocation due to you for each of your enrolled learners.

Fees Free reporting is completed on a monthly cycle.

Reporting cycle

Each month, we provide you with a blank 'Fees Free All Enrolments and Costs' template on Workspace 2, which you use to report all of your eligible Fees Free enrolments to us to date for the calendar year.

We provide you with templates on the second Wednesday of each month. These are due back to us on the third Wednesday. In months when a Single Data Return (SDR) is also due, reporting remains open for a further week. It's important to submit your Fees Free returns on time, as we need to wait for all returns to be submitted before we can start processing them. This is so we can correctly allocate for learners enrolled at multiple TEOs.

You can find the dates of each round on the TEC business calendar, and also in the monthly Fees Free newsletter, 'Fees Free Focus'.

We email the lead contact and the data return contacts for each organisation at the beginning of each reporting round.

When you submit your returns to us, we validate the information and send you two reports in return. These let you know any errors we have found in your return ('Fees Free All Enrolments and Costs Data Validation' report) and tell you how much we intend to allocate to you for each learner you have reported to us ('Fees Free Multiple Providers and Cap Limit' report).



'Fees Free All Enrolments and Costs' template

The 'Fees Free All Enrolments and Costs' return is used to monitor the Fees Free entitlement use of your learners, and to calculate the payments due to you for those learners. We give you the 'Fees Free All Enrolments and Costs' template each month to fill in. On this template you need to include all of your eligible enrolments and the fees associated with those enrolments, including any student services fees charged to those learners, for the calendar year to date. See [Figure 1 in the Appendix](#) for an example of the information required.

This report is **cumulative**, so we expect the report to increase in size each month as you enrol more learners throughout the year. Any changes to enrolments need to be updated in the following month's return, and your December return should be a complete and accurate report of all Fees Free eligible enrolments for the year.

The fees that you enter in the 'Fees Free All Enrolments and Costs' return are the fees that you are charging the learner for their enrolments. We ask you to report the tuition fees, the compulsory course costs, and the student services fees for each learner, as well as the EFTS they are using, and other information about their enrolments.

Note that the fees you charge eligible learners must be the same as the fees that you charge every learner in the same circumstances (whether or not they are eligible for Fees Free) who is enrolled in the same course.

See the TEC website for [a guide to help you fill in the 'Fees Free All Enrolments and Costs' return](#). If you have any questions or need help filling in your report, please contact your Relationship Manager or the [Customer Contact Group](#).

Need help with Workspace 2?

See the TEC website for [information and helpful Workspace 2 resources](#).

'Fees Free All Enrolments and Costs Data Validation' report

After we receive your 'Fees Free All Enrolments and Costs' report, we validate the information and upload a 'Fees Free All Enrolments and Costs Data Validation' report to Workspace 2. See [Figure 2 in the Appendix](#) for [an example of the report](#).

This report identifies any errors in your 'Fees Free All Enrolments and Costs' submission.

Common errors are:

- fees or EFTS that exceed the amount approved for the course in Services For Tertiary Education Organisations (STEO)
- course or qualification codes that cannot be found in STEO
- GST calculation errors
- incorrect source of funding code on student withdrawals.

We can't allocate fees to you for enrolments that have errors, so please check your Data Validation report every month and correct any errors on your following month's 'Fees Free All Enrolments and Costs' return.

We email the lead contact and data return contact(s) for your organisation when this report is uploaded to Workspace 2. See the TEC website for [a guide to help you read and understand the 'Fees Free All Enrolments and Costs Data Validation' report](#). If you need help identifying the cause of any errors, let us know.

'Fees Free Multiple Providers and Cap Limit' report

After we validate the data you have submitted, we determine the amount each learner can be allocated for the courses you have reported.

When calculating this, we must take into account:

- learner eligibility
- the amount of Fees Free study or training each learner has undertaken in a previous year
- any study or training each learner is enrolled in with another organisation in the current year
- any errors in the 'Fees Free All Enrolments and Costs' returns
- other factors which impact learner entitlement use, such as entitlement use appeals.

Learners who are in carryover (ie, have used entitlement across multiple calendar years) must be calculated using the average EFTS value of the enrolments reported to us.

Once we calculate the allocations, we give you a 'Fees Free Multiple Providers and Cap Limit' report. See Figure 3 in the Appendix for an [example of the report](#). The report tells you what we intend to allocate to you for each learner for the calendar year to date, based on the information you have submitted to us that month. You can use this to calculate any additional amount you may need to charge the learner.

We'll send the lead contact and data return contact(s) for your organisation an email when this report is uploaded to Workspace 2. See the TEC website for [a guide to help you read and understand the 'Fees Free Multiple Providers and Cap Limit' report](#).

A learner's allocation is not finalised until the end of the calendar year, and we do expect changes to this amount throughout the year depending on the factors listed above.

You may invoice eligible learners for fees at any time. However, you cannot require an eligible learner to pay the fees unless we have notified you that they do not have carryover entitlement, or we have confirmed how much we will pay on their behalf. If you are sending invoices to learners who are likely to have part or all of their fees covered by Fees Free, please advise them that the amount is not final.

Single Data Return and Fees Free

The enrolment information you report in your Single Data Return (SDR) and in your Fees Free returns must match, including qualification and course codes, start and end dates, source of funding codes, and EFTS.

After you submit your August SDR, we reconcile it against your most recent Fees Free return and provide you with a list of mismatched data and learners that have not been included in both reports. This is used as a reminder to make sure the two reports are aligned in time for the end-of-year wash-up. While validating your end of year Fees Free reports, we also complete a reconciliation against your December SDR. This is to check that all enrolments in your final Fees Free report are also in your SDR. **Enrolments that are not in your SDR cannot be covered in your final Fees Free allocation** as we cannot confirm the funded enrolment.

Data resubmissions for previous years

It's important that you report all your eligible learner enrolments to us as soon as you get them, and that you actively work to correct any errors that you find during the year. However, if you do identify any errors, or learners that have been excluded from a previous year's report, please let us know. We may give you the opportunity to resubmit your report and change your final allocation.

We may also ask you to resubmit a report if a learner's eligibility status has changed retrospectively (eg, due to a statutory declaration submission or an appeal). If this happens, please make the changes quickly so we can organise fee payment for the learner in a timely way. When you receive payment for a learner's fees, you must refund any fees already paid by the learner (directly, or via StudyLink) as soon as possible.

Allocations and payments

Most Fees Free payments are pre-determined based on the estimated Fees Free enrolments for the calendar year. We use the enrolment information from prior years to help us determine the allocation for each TEO for the calendar year, and then create a payment schedule based on that allocation.

Payment schedules

Most TEOs receive a payment schedule which they can access on the My Allocations and Payments app through [Ngā Kete](#). Payments are intended to mimic learner enrolments throughout the year, usually with a larger payment up front, followed by smaller regular payments afterwards.

We make adjustment payments in-year as required, if your reported delivery is trending higher or lower than your allocation for the calendar year. We assess your reported delivery each month, and contact you if we need to adjust your allocation. You may also ask us to review your allocation at any time.

Zero-based allocations

There are some TEOs for which we do not have enough historical data to make an accurate estimate of Fees Free enrolments for the calendar year. This can include organisations new to delivering Fees Free, as well as organisations that have had inconsistent enrolments in the past.

Organisations with a zero-based allocation will not receive a payment schedule. Instead, in-year adjustment payments will be made throughout the year as required, based on reported delivery. We consider your reported delivery each month, and contact you if we need to make an adjustment to your allocation. You may also ask us to review your allocation at any time.

Wash-ups

Month to month, Fees Free delivery can fluctuate a lot due to changes to learner enrolments, eligibility, and reporting errors, so we do not expect payments received to match the actual delivery until the final wash-up at the end of the year.

At the end of each year, after we validate the final reports, we complete a wash-up of all Fees Free allocations and make a final payment or recovery, so that your final allocation matches your delivery for the year.

Advising learners

Learners can find information about Fees Free by visiting the [Fees Free website](#), or by contacting us at customerservice@tec.govt.nz or 0800 601 301. Learners may also come to you for help understanding Fees Free.

How learners can check their eligibility

Learners should check their eligibility for Fees Free by entering their NSN on the NSN checker on the [Fees Free website](#), or through the [NZQA website](#).

If the eligibility of a learner is 'Unknown', you must advise the learner that, to receive Fees Free, they must check their eligibility using the [Fees Free website's online tool](#). Even if they know they meet the eligibility criteria, they still need to check their status as there may be steps they need to complete to inform us.

Statutory declarations

When we do not have enough information available to determine a learner's eligibility status, the learner's status is 'Unknown' (also known as 'Maybe'). If the learner determines that they meet the eligibility criteria for Fees Free, they can complete a statutory declaration by following the steps on the website, and send it to us at feesfreecheck@tec.govt.nz.

We'll process the statutory declaration and change the learner's status to 'Yes' based on the information in their statutory declaration. We may also change a learner's eligibility status if we become aware of other information relating to their eligibility, or if we determine that the information we relied on is incorrect.

It is important that learners do not complete a statutory declaration if they don't meet the eligibility criteria. A statutory declaration is a legal document. It is an offence under the Education and Training Act 2020 and Crimes Act 1961 to give any altered, false, incomplete or misleading information or to make a false statement or declaration. If a learner needs help determining whether or not they meet the criteria, they should contact us at customerservice@tec.govt.nz or 0800 601 301 before generating a statutory declaration.

Learners with an 'Unknown' status are not considered eligible for Fees Free, and we cannot cover their fees while they have this status. However, the status can change at any time. If a learner becomes eligible for Fees Free by declaring their eligibility during the year, we'll still cover their fees for the full calendar year, or from when they met the criteria (ie, if they meet the residency criteria part-way through the year), whichever is latest.

Once a statutory declaration is processed, we update the learner's status on the Fees Free website, as well as in the eligibility files on Workspace 2 for TEOs. Learners are not expected to let their TEO know once their status has changed to 'Yes', as TEOs are informed through these avenues.

There is a section about statutory declarations in the [Frequently Asked Questions page on the Fees Free website](#).

Marketing Toolkit

We've created a Marketing Toolkit to help you encourage learners to check their Fees Free eligibility at [FeesFree.govt.nz](https://feesfree.govt.nz). The toolkit includes:

- website copy for TEOs
- Fees Free [quick learner guide](#) that you can share with learners
- social media copy for your own channels, including copy in English, Māori, Samoan and Tongan
- links to our social media that you can share
- video assets that you can share

Check out the [Fees Free Marketing Toolkit on the TEC website](#).

More information

The TEC website (tec.govt.nz) and the Fees Free website ([FeesFree.govt.nz](https://feesfree.govt.nz)) are both useful for finding information about Fees Free. If you can't find something you need, please [contact us](#).

Information guides and newsletters

Some [information guides](#) have been published on the TEC website which cover particular topics, such as the methodology for calculating Fees Free learner carry-over entitlement, and how Fees Free is applied to aviation provision. New guides are added as needed.

Remember to [sign up to our monthly newsletter, 'Fees Free Focus'](#), to receive updates, reporting tips, and the reporting schedule.

COVID-19 and Fees Free

Many learners have been adversely affected by COVID-19, either by not being able to participate fully in their studies or training, or due to illness or financial hardship. This has resulted in some learners withdrawing from their study or training or not completing courses.

We automatically apply a rule to all study and training where a withdrawal occurred between **23 March and 30 June 2020 or between 17 August and 31 December 2021**, called the COVID-19 Blanket Withdrawal Periods.

For learners enrolled in provider-based study during this time, this effectively reinstates the learner's full or partial entitlement (EFTS and dollars) to Fees Free by discounting the courses the learner withdrew from within these periods. We still cover the fees for these courses (up to their cap).

Learners who did not withdraw from their study or training within the COVID-19 Blanket Withdrawal Periods, but feel that their ability to participate in their study or training was affected by COVID-19, can ask us to review their entitlement use by entering their NSN and filling out the web-form on the [Fees Free website](#).

Privacy

Our [Privacy Notice](#) outlines how the TEC protects and manages all personal information we hold.

We can release learner Fees Free information to you as their TEO using the clause in the Privacy Act which refers to 'directly related purpose'. The clause means we can provide information to TEOs on Fees Free learners without the learner's direct consent, as long as the purpose meets the Privacy Act requirements and is consistent with our purposes for collecting the information.

We need to verify the person we are speaking with on the phone, or by email, is a direct TEO employee before we can share information. Make sure you are aware of your EDUMIS/ Provider number, and use your TEO email, not a personal one. If we cannot verify that you work for the TEO, we must uphold the Act and not provide the learner's information.

This is the information that we can share without express learner consent, as this is linked to the Privacy Act and ‘directly related purpose’:

- learner’s consumption – in order for the provisions of the Fees Free agreement to be met the TEC must have the ability to advise a TEO of a learner’s consumption of Fees Free entitlement
- learner eligibility – in accordance with your funding conditions, fees cannot be charged to a student if the TEC advises that it will pay fees on behalf of that student.

Please send any requests for information in the above scenarios to customerservice@tec.govt.nz, or phone 0800 601 301.

Frequently asked questions

How do I contact the TEC?

For general enquiries, the Customer Contact Group is your first point of contact. We are available from 8.30am to 5pm on weekdays, except Wednesdays, when we are available from 9.30am to 5pm.

Phone: 0800 601 301 or +64 4 462 5201

Email: customerservice@tec.govt.nz

You can also contact your dedicated Relationship Manager or Advisor. If you’re not sure who your Relationship Manager and/or Advisor is, contact the Customer Contact Group for assistance.

What are the dates for the reporting rounds?

You can find dates for the reporting rounds on the [TEC Business Calendar](#). We also provide the dates for the upcoming month in the ‘Fees Free Focus’ newsletter.

What do I do if a learner does not have a National Student Number (NSN)?

A National Student Number (NSN) is the education sector’s unique identifier. A learner needs an NSN to enrol with your organisation, and you need to use their NSN to report the learner’s fees to us.

Funded tertiary education organisations have the ability to issue an NSN to any learner through the National Student Index (NSI). Learn more about [the National Student Index and how to access it](#).

Can I ask for additional Fees Free allocation?

We assess your reported delivery against your allocation each month, and let you know if we need to make adjustments to your allocation. This assessment is evidence-based, so we consider the consistency of the delivery you report over several months before making an adjustment. You can also request an assessment at any time by contacting the Customer Contact Group on 0800 601 301.

Why have you not allocated Fees Free for a learner's fees to us?

Several things can prevent us from allocating Fees Free to you for some or all of a learner's fees. The most common are:

- The learner has used their full entitlement already and cannot receive further Fees Free.
- The learner is enrolled with another tertiary education organisation and does not have enough entitlement remaining to cover all enrolments at both organisations.
- There are errors in your reporting. We cannot allocate for enrolments/fees that do not pass validation, so it's important to check for errors each month, and correct these in your report the following month.

We let you know these reasons in the 'Multiple Providers and Cap Limit' report we return to you each month. If you need help identifying why we haven't covered fees, contact us and we'll be happy to help.

How do I fix a Fees Free report I have already submitted?

If you've discovered an error on a report you've just submitted, and the reporting deadline for that month has not yet passed, you can ask us to set the report to 'Revise' in Workspace 2. This means you can make further changes to your report and submit it again before the deadline.

If the deadline has already passed, you won't be able to make changes and will need to amend any errors on your report the following month. Once it's available to you, you can use your 'All Enrolments and Costs Data Validation' report to help you identify any errors you may have.

Do I need to report courses that already have zero fees?

Courses that started before 1 January 2023 that had zero fees were eligible for Fees Free, and used a learner's Fees Free entitlement in EFTS. You need to include these courses in your reports for 2018 to 2022. From 1 January 2023, courses that have no tuition fees and no compulsory course costs for all learners enrolled in the course do not use a learner's Fees Free entitlement. This means you do not need to report these in your Fees Free returns.

This does not include courses that have fees, but the fees were paid by a scholarships, student loan, employer, or other zero fees scheme; courses that the learner has withdrawn from and been granted a fee refund for (unless full EFTS are also removed from the learner's record); and courses that have zero tuition fees but did have compulsory course costs associated with the course.

You should ensure that the course has zero tuition fees and zero compulsory course costs recorded against it in Services for Tertiary Education Organisations (STEO).

How do I report learner withdrawals?

If a learner has withdrawn from a course within the refund deadline with full EFTS and fee refund, you do not need to report the enrolment to us, as the learner is not using any entitlement.

If a learner has withdrawn from a course and you are retaining some EFTS and/or fees, you do need to report the enrolment to us. Make sure to include the enrolment in your next return, along with the updated fees you are charging the learner, and the updated EFTS they have used. You may also need to adjust the source of funding code you are using for the learner.

You can find further information on reporting learner withdrawals in the [‘Fees Free All Enrolments and Costs’ guide](#).

How does Fees Free interact with other funds that cover learner fees?

There are a few other funds that also cover learner fees such as Youth Guarantee (YG), Māori and Pasifika Trades Training (MPTT), the Refugee English Fund, and the Targeted Training and Apprenticeships Fund (TTAF). It’s important to understand how these funds work alongside Fees Free. In 2024 most of the courses funded through another funding arrangement are not eligible for Fees Free, and don’t count as part of a learner’s entitlement use.

See the [rules for these fund interactions](#), along with reporting requirements and other frequently asked questions.

Glossary

You can find a [glossary of terms](#) on the TEC website.

Appendix

Figure 1: Example of 'Fees Free All Enrolments and Costs' template filled in by a provider using sample NSN 123456789

National Student Number	Non-Standard Fee	Qualification Code	Course Code	Course Start Date	Course End Date	Student Course Withdrawal Date	Course EFTS factor	Source of Funding	Course Tuition Fee
123456789	No	ABC123	XYZ123	1/03/2024	30/06/2024		0.1250	01	434
123456789	No	ABC123	XYZ456	1/07/2024	25/11/2024	14/09/2024	0.1447	01	521
123456789	No	ABC123		1/03/2024	25/11/2024				

Figure 2: Example of 'Fees Free All Enrolments and Costs Data Validation' report completed by TEC using sample NSN 123456789

Eligible National Student Number	Eligible Source of Funding	Eligible Qualification Code	Eligible Course Code	Course Tuition Fee AND Compulsory Course Costs Compared to STEO	Course Tuition Fee GST Calculation	Compulsory Course Costs GST Calculation
Yes	Yes	Yes	Error	Error	Yes	Yes
Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Yes		Yes				

Figure 3: Example of 'Fees Free Multiple Providers and Cap Limit' report completed by TEC using sample NSN 123456789

National Student Number	Student Enrolled with Multiple Providers in 2024	Fee Allocation Required	All Fees Reported by You Including GST
123456789	No	Validation Errors Identified	\$ 1,315.00

(GST Exclusive \$)	GST Charged on the Course Tuition Fee	Compulsory Course Costs Fee (GST Exclusive \$)	GST Charged on the Compulsory Course Costs Fee	Fee Code	Fee Description	Compulsory Student Services Fee	Student Services Fee (GST Exclusive \$)	GST Charged on the Student Services Fee
65.78	65.22	86.96	13.04					
78.74	78.26	86.96	13.04					
				SSF-1	Student Services Fee 1	Yes	13.04	1.96

Student Services Fee GST Calculation	Course EFTS Factor Compared to STEO	Eligible Compulsory Student Services Fee	Eligible From Date	Comments1	Comments2	Data Validation ID
	Error	Yes	2024-01-01		Exclude	00000001
	Yes	Yes	2024-01-01			00000002
Yes		Yes	2024-01-01			00000003

2024 Fees Free Allocation Including GST	Comments
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\$ 715.00

The data you submitted contains one or more validation errors for some of the rows submitted for this Learner and is unable to be allocated the full fees you have reported. Please check your Data Validation report.

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