Welcome to our Webinar Reporting – Getting Started.

We work in the HEIMS Data Collections Section for the Department of Education and Training and we work closely with our VET colleagues in administering the VET Student Loans and programs under the Higher Education Support Act 2003.

Our role is to support approved providers in meeting their reporting requirements, the calculation of student HELP entitlements and transferring student HELP debts to the ATO.

The purpose of today’s webinar is to provide information and support to recently approved providers who are new to reporting. We are assuming that you have no reporting experience and a limited understanding of what you need to do. So having no experience is not a problem. Today’s training will outline the processes that your organisation needs to have in place to be ready for your first submission of data.

This webinar is very similar to the presentation that Lorraine delivered at the recent VET Student Loans Provider information session and we hope that you may benefit from a recap.

Please submit any questions you may have and we will do our best to answer them during the webinar.

All information provided today, including a copy of this presentation is available on the supporting webpage.

Today we will run through the key administration processes for reporting your VET student loans data.

**Know your data requirements** – You need to have a clear understanding of what the reporting requirements are and how you will meet them on an ongoing basis. This is one of your most important responsibilities as an approved provider.

**Collect the right information** – You need to know what information you need to collect on your students, courses and units of study to enable you to complete your data files

**Structuring your courses** – We will look at how you can structure your units of study and parts of courses so you are compliant with programme requirements and can report quality data regularly

**Plan for your deadlines** – You must know when your reporting deadlines occur throughout the year. Make sure your reporting dates are incorporated into your organisation’s administration processes. This will ensure you don’t miss a deadline and risk being non compliant for late data submissions.

**Have your systems ready** – You need to be able to meet the system requirements for reporting data and have applied for access to the HEIMS reporting systems

**CHESSNs** - Know how to allocate CHESSNs to students who are deferring their tuition fees though a HELP loan

**Train your team – don’t rely on just one person** – It is essential that you have a trained team who knows how to report and that each member has applied for individual access to HEIMS systems
Reporting with HEPCAT - We will provide a brief overview of how to use HEPCAT to report your data

If you have each of these items in place your organisation will be well prepared to start reporting.
The information provided in this webinar is available at HEIMSHelp page under ‘Training’, ‘Webinar Presentations’ at the “Reporting – Getting Started Webinar Presentation” link.

On this page you will find:

• A copy of the presentation
• The reporting checklist
• Details on collecting the right information on your students and courses
• Details on what training resources we provide including our webinar presentations
• Information on the systems you will use - HEPCAT, HEIMS Administration and HEIMS Online, including details on minimum system requirement
Before you start reporting

As an approved provider there are some essential administration responsibilities that you must address before you start reporting data. These core responsibilities include:

• structuring your courses into at least 3 equal fee periods

• publishing your schedule of tuition fees and your census dates on your website

• ensuring all students who are seeking a VET student loan to pay their tuition fees have:
  • submitted their electronic Commonwealth Assistance Form (eCAF) prior to the first census day and have all the relevant information they need to make an informed decision about their HELP loan
  • uploaded their students enrolment information to eCAF
  • provided you with their Tax File Number; and
  • you have robust administrative process in place to store their TFN in accordance with the privacy principles.

• you must also be able to issue invoices and Commonwealth Assistance Notices (CAN) to students who are seeking a HELP loan

• VET providers must also ensure their approved VSL courses have been activated in Higher Education Loan Program (HELP) IT System known as HITS. You will be unable to report any data until your courses have an active status in this system.

Contact: VETStudentLoans@education.gov.au
• If you are uncertain about any of these items more detailed information is provided in the VET Student Loans Manual for Providers. You can also contact the VET Student Loans team at VET Student Loans and their email address is on the slide.
To help you understand your data reporting obligations, our New Starter toolkit on HEIMSHELP provides you with quick and easy access to the information VET providers need to start reporting data.

As your organisation is new to reporting we have arranged the information on this page in a logical order to step you through the key processes for reporting data successfully.

If you click on each image it you will be navigated to detailed information that the explains the process.

We will now explain the key steps.
Now you have your HELP administration in place, the very first step to being able to report data to the department is to know what you need to report, how to do this and when it must be done.

The reporting requirements for each year are all clearly set out on HEIMSHELP website. They include information about:

- What you report
- When you report

The **Scope guidelines** provide you with the details of what information must be included in each submission and any special conditions relating to the submission.

The **Structure guidelines** explains how to format and structure your data file for each of the submissions to enable you to directly import your data into the reporting tool known as HEPCAT and how to create your reporting data files directly from your student management system.

The **data element specifications** explain how to code the data for each submission. The elements may also include coding notes to help you choose the correct code for the data field.

It is **essential** that you review the scope, structure and data elements guidelines to ensure that your systems and processes are in place before you start reporting.

The **Reporting schedule** lists all of your reporting deadlines.
VET providers are required to report all students who are eligible to access a VET Student Loan, irrespective of whether or not they choose to take out the loan to pay for their tuition fees.

This means, that all students who are enrolled in your approved courses are reported where:

- they meet the citizenship requirements i.e. They are an Australian citizen the holder a permanent humanitarian visa or a Special Category visa holder for New Zealand citizens and
- they have elected to pay their tuition fees upfront 
  OR
- they have chosen to access a VET Student Loan to pay all or part of their tuition fees

Students who do not meet these requirements are excluded from your data submissions.
There is a range of information you need to collect on your students, courses and units of study so that you can report the correct data in your submissions.

You will need to collect personal information of your students including their name, address and date of birth. For students who have deferred their tuition fees through a VET Student Loan you will also need to allocate a CHESSN and have a process in place to collect and store their tax file number in accordance with privacy guidelines.

Another process that you will need to become familiar with is the TFN verification. The main purpose of TFN verification is to ensure that when a HELP debt is reported to the ATO, it is allocated to the correct person and when a debt is revised or deleted, the correction is applied to the right person. We will talk more about this process in future webinars.

You will also need to report details of your VSL courses as approved by training.gov.au.

The information that you report on your units of study must be consistent with your fee schedules and the details provided on your students CAN notices and invoices.
When determining how you will organise your course and units of study it is important to structure your units in a way that ensures the package of work is delivered consistently across the year (or duration of the course), over at least 3 equal fee periods.

You will also need to determine the key attributes for your units:

- the EFTSL value (Equivalent Full time Study Load) or how long it will take a student studying full time to complete the unit.
- the census day is 20% into the duration of the unit. When setting the census date you will need to consider the start and end date of the unit
- the field of education (or field of study) for the unit. This remains the same for all students undertaking the unit
- Tuition fees – how much each unit in the course will cost the student

It is important that these attributes are consistent with the details published on your schedule of fees.
Setting your fee periods allows students to indicate to the department via the eCAF system of their progression and engagement throughout the course to continue their access to a VET Student Loan.

To help with understanding the requirement to structure your courses into at least three fee periods of equal (or approximately equal) length, we have provided an example based on a Diploma that requires one year of full time study to complete the academic requirements.

In our example, we have structured our diploma into 3 fee periods. It is acceptable to have more, however each period must be of similar duration.

Our course commenced in January 2019 and ends in December 2019. The first period starts in January and ends in May. The next period starts in May and ends September, with the final period starting in September and ending in December.

Each fee period contains one census day.

The census days have also been set in line with the rule of being 20% of the way between when that part of the course starts to be provided and when a student is reasonably expected to complete that part of the course.

The final point is how to calculate the Equivalent Full Time Study Load (EFTSL) value.

As this Diploma takes students 1 year to complete the package of work when studied on a fulltime basis, the EFTSL value is 1. As the units of study have been separated into 3 equal fee periods we have divided 1 EFTSL for the course by the 3 units, each unit has a value of .333 (one third of 1 EFTSL). This EFTSL value is reported in the load liability file are part of your Student Submission as 0333333333 on Element 339.

Once you are clear on which students you are reporting and the information you need to collect to complete your submissions, you will need to build a plan for including the reporting dates into your administration processes. These dates are detailed in the reporting schedule.

Let's have a look at the reporting deadlines that apply to the 2018 year.

- The first submission to report is your VET Course of Study submission, which needs to be submitted prior to your first VET Student submission.

- The next deadline is the 7th day of the month following census days that have occurred in each month.

- For any students who complete an approved VSL course you will be required to report details of the completion by the 7th of the following month. This deadline may not apply to you until later in the year.

- Also for every unit of study reported during 2018 an outcome for this study is to be reported by 7th October and 7th Jan 2019. In addition to this you will be required to update any records reported with an in progress status to the actual outcome of the study when completed. These updates status are to by reported by 7th day of the following month.

- When your organisation identifies any data reporting errors you will be required to correct this data by the 7th of the following month.

To assist you with keeping track of your reporting deadlines calendars are provided on HEIMSHELP.
You can also use our Google, iCal and Outlook calendars. You can do this by subscribing to them using your Google account, sync them to your iCal account or download the .ICS file. Information on how to subscribe is available on HEIMSHELP from the Calendars tab.

A printer friendly version of the calendars are also available and we strongly recommend you print these out and keep them at your desktop.
We will now look how these reporting deadlines would apply to our example Diploma Course.

As the census date for Period 1 falls during the month of February the deadline of **7 March** would apply to reporting the student data for this period.

For period 2, the census day falls in June 2019, so the reporting deadline is **7 July 2019**.

For period 3, the census day falls in October, so the reporting deadline is **7 November 2019**.

So for this particular course, you would be reporting your student data three times during the year.

As well as reporting your students enrolment and load data in the Student submission, you must also report completions data. There are **two completions submissions** to report the outcome of your students study.

1. The first of the Completions submission is the **Unit of Study Completions** - this submission is reported quarterly. For the quarter ending on 31 March, the deadline for reporting the unit of study outcomes is **7 April**. The deadline for reporting unit of study outcomes for the June quarter is **7 July** and the deadline for reporting unit of study outcomes for the December quarter is **7 January 2020** (census date falls in October).

Note: You must also update the outcome status of any units of study you have reported with a status of **"in progress"** in an earlier submission with the actual outcome of the study once it has been determined.
2. The second completion submission is the **VET course completions** submission. As the end date for this course is December 2019, for any students who finish this course the details of their course completion is to be reported by **7 January 2020** deadline.

A key component in being able to meet these reporting deadlines is planning ahead. Let's look at planning in a little more detail.
Meeting your deadlines

Best practice: Plan ahead & Report early!

– as soon as possible after your census dates have passed
– allow time to resolve errors
– reduces your stress and last minute panic

Your responsibilities are not met until the data has been reported without errors

Being well prepared and organised ahead of time will ensure that you can meet your deadlines with minimum of stress and pressure. Reporting your data late is a serious breach of your legislative responsibilities. Penalties apply to non-compliance with reporting requirements and this may also affect your provider payments as well as the reporting of your students’ debts to the ATO.

Remember the reporting deadlines are the absolute last date that you can report your data. But it is best practice to report as soon as possible after your census days have passed or when a completion is finalised. Reporting your data as early as you can will help to remove any last minute stress and panic.

It’s important to note that your reporting obligations are not met until the department has confirmed your submission has been accepted without errors.

It is essential that you allow plenty of time to resolve errors and not to leave reporting to the last minute. If you have any errors that need to be resolved it’s likely you will run out of time. This has made many new providers non compliant with their first reporting commitment.

If you can’t meet a deadline you will need to contact us immediately. This is because reporting is a legislative requirement. A staff member who is sick or away on leave is NOT a valid reason for your submission to be reported late.

We strongly recommend that you have a trained team to assist with reporting. We’ll talk more about this shortly.
Questions

The systems required for reporting and using HEIMS environments requires a Windows 7 operating system and Windows Explorer. The department has tested these environments and can assure compatibility. Details of system requirements are available on HEIMSHELP which you can access from the “Reporting with HEPCAT toolkit” and the “Systems and access page”

If your organisation uses the systems or environments noted as “not supported” you may experience some difficulties which the department is unable to provide technical support to resolve, particularly if you use a MAC operating system.
What is HEIMS Administration? It is a web application that providers use to allocate students CHESSNs, manage duplicate CHESSNs, view information on students entitlements and access information on students reaching their entitlement limits.

We will look at this application in a little more detail shortly, as allocating CHESSNs to your students and checking that they have VET loans balance to study at your organisation is one of the first processes you will need to do.

HEIMS WebServices
Can be used by providers to allocate CHESSNs or get information on entitlements for a larger number of students. This is most appropriate for providers with large numbers of students receiving Commonwealth assistance.
In order to do this you will need to build an interface to make WebService calls directly to HEIMS. Technical information on setting up and using WebServices is available on our Systems & access page on HEIMSHELP. Setting up a WebServices interface may incur IT support costs for your organisation.

What is HEPCAT? It is the Higher Education Provider Client Assistance Tool that you use to prepare, validate and submit your data to the department.

What is HEIMS database? It is the Higher Education Information Management System. It is an electronic information system that stores all higher education and VET data reported to the department. HEIMS also enables you to access a range of information on your data using HEIMS Online and HEIMS Administration.

What is HEIMS Online? It is also a web application that providers use to review their data reported to
the HEIMS database. It enables you to directly access your submission reports, to view, check and verify the accuracy of your reported data. Using this application is recommended as it’s difficult to obtain an overall picture in HEPCAT. Your data collections team will regularly use HEIMS Online.
Authorised staff at your organisation needing access to HEIMS systems are required to complete our Access to HEIMS application form which you can download from the Systems and access page on HEIMSHELP. Before access can be granted the terms and conditions listed on the form must be accepted by the user, particularly in regards to the sharing of users ID and password, which is not permitted under any circumstances.
What is a CHESSN?

It is a unique identifier allocated to students in receipt of HELP assistance and is an acronym for Commonwealth Higher Education Student Support Number. It is used to monitor their assistance and is included in data reported to the ATO. The CHESSN remains linked to the student for their academic life. And all students accessing a HELP loan must be allocated a CHESSN.

Student CHESSNs can be allocated by two methods. The first is via HEIMS Administration, which allows you to issue one CHESSN at a time.

The second method is via HEIMS Web Services used to allocate a large number of CHESSNs at the one time. Technical information on how to configure and use Web Services is available from the CHESSN toolkit on HEIMSHELP.

HEIMS Administration is a free application. However, the setting up of HEIMS Web Services may incur IT support costs for your organisation.

To allocate a CHESSN in HEIMS Administration you would simply log on using the same user ID and password that you use for HEPCAT.

The **CHESSN toolkit** on HEIMSHELP has everything you need to know about allocating CHESSNs including User Guides.

Entitlement info on HEIMS Administration will allow you to check a students entitlement to ensure that they have sufficient FEE-HELP balance remaining to study at your organisation. Remember the FEE-HELP limit for a student is their accumulated FEE-HELP and VET loans.

The “**Guide to viewing student entitlement information**” is also available from the “**CHESSN toolkit**” and a link has been provided on the supporting page.

Entitlement checks can also be undertaken in WebServices in a similar way to allocating CHESSNs.
Let's have a look at reporting your data with HEPCAT.

It is a free application that you use to report data to the department. As mentioned, when you report your data it will be stored in the Higher Education Information Management System database known as HEIMS.

HEPCAT is installed on the C drive of your PC - it cannot be installed onto a server or network drive.

Detailed instructions on how to install and use HEPCAT are provided in our HEPCAT User Guides and also in our basic HEPCAT training videos which are all available from the “Reporting with HEPCAT toolkit” on HEIMSHelp. To install HEPCAT correctly it is important to follow each step as detailed in the user guide.

- HEPCAT allows you to prepare your submission. Your data can be keyed in manually or submission files can be imported from your student management systems

- A big advantage for HEPCAT is that it checks the accuracy of your data against system and policy rules. If errors do occur HEPCAT will provide you with detailed error reports so that you can correct your data.

- After all HEPCAT system checks have been passed the data can be submitted to HEIMS.
Webinars are interactive online seminars presented live so that participants can submit questions and comments in real time. These are normally presented in 45 minute modules. You will find our Webinars useful as they provide essential information to help with reporting. Our Webinar presentations are made available on HEIMSHELP to be viewed at anytime. To view the list of webinars see our training page on HEIMSHELP.

We offer customised individual or small group sessions at any time of the year. These sessions provide an opportunity for your staff to work with our team to focus on specific challenges you are facing with reporting. These sessions can be offered face to face in Canberra or via a Webinar, you can decide what works best for you.

We also offer a range of HEPCAT Basic training videos to assist you with using HEPCAT, these are available on HEIMSHELP from the training webpage.

More training resources will be available and the dates will be advertised in our regular eNews and on the training webpage.
Why is training important

It is essential that providers ensure that their data collections teams are fully trained to meet your ongoing requirements, as reporting directly affects your student debts and provider funding. It is important to get it right.

Leaving the sole responsibility of reporting with one staff member at your organisation can make it difficult to meet your requirements. We recommend that more than 1 person is trained. Reporting is made easier if you have a trained team, so we encourage your data collections team to attend or participate in our training sessions so they:

• get up-to-date information on reporting requirements and new functionality
• know how to use HEPCAT and other reporting systems
• avoid costly and time-consuming mistakes
• get answers to questions and bring valuable knowledge back to the organisation
• stay connected

HEIMSHELP provides an extensive range of information that will help you manage all aspects of your reporting.

The sections you will need to use first include:

The “New Starter toolkit” – This is where you can find all the key information for newly approved providers or new staff who are starting to report for the first time.

The toolkits explain all the main reporting processes you need to know.

- The “Reporting with HEPCAT toolkit” will be one of your primary tools as this explains all the information you need to know before you can start using HEPCAT. This includes the minimum system requirements, details on how to install HEPCAT and links to training resources, user guides and other essential information.

The Training section includes all the details of our training resources, particularly our webinars and online training videos.

Newsletters – You can access current and past eNews. If you are not already subscribed you can do this from the eNews page on HEIMSHELP. eNews is provided monthly and will keep you up to date with all reporting issues and upcoming events.

Appendices, codes and tables provide you with the codes you need for elements such as field of education or postcodes where there are large numbers of possible values to report.

User guides – explain how to use each of the HEIMS systems, including HEPCAT, HEIMS Online and
HEIMS Administration

Make this website your first point of reference when you are preparing or reporting your data. We always appreciate your feedback on our resources and how we can continually improve the support we provide.
Who to contact at the department.

If you have any policy and program management for the new VET student loans please contact our VET colleagues at VET Student Loans.

For your questions in relation to your provider payments for VET student loan scheme please direct them to the VET student loans team.

Any questions relating to using the electronic Commonwealth Assistance Form please send them to HEenquiries@education.gov.au.
Need help with reporting?

For all your data questions contact
HEIMS Data Collections
Section

HEIMS.datacollections@education.gov.au

Telephone: (02) 6240 7487

If you need assistance with reporting here are our contact details.