

Advocacy & Welfare

Reversal of Debt and Waiver of Academic Penalty

Applying for Reversal of Debt

You can apply for the refund of fees or removal of HECS debt (and removal of academic penalty) for units of study that you failed if you were impacted by special circumstances and:

- you were unable to continue studying and withdrew from a unit(s) after the census date had passed, or
- you were unable to successfully complete the requirements of a unit(s).

Our team is here to provide guidance on drafting your application and helping you understand how to meet the criteria so that your Reversal of Debt application is successful. If you would like to discuss your application, please get in touch by phoning **6773 3116** or by email **advocacy@une.edu.au**. If you would like to draft your personal statement (see below for more detail) and send it to us one of our advocates will be happy to review it and suggest any changes. We can work on it together until it is ready to submit. Once we see your draft statement we can advise on what documentation will be required to support it.

Important to know

- The Reversal of Debt process is governed by legislation. After all you are asking the Australian Tax Office to return your fees or remove your debt. The legislation prescribes what acceptable independent evidence is required to demonstrate special circumstances. The UNE Remissions Team must comply with the strict requirements of that legislation when approving of your application.



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- The Remissions Team have access to your UNE records and are required to verify that you were a 'genuine' student. This means they will check to see that you were in fact engaged with the unit/s and completing the necessary coursework prior to your special circumstances occurring.
- Submitting your application does not guarantee that you will be successful.
- It is really important to attach as much relevant supporting documentation as possible.
- Head [HERE](#) for more information on special circumstances.
- Here are two links that give a little bit of information about the process and will link you to the form which you will eventually submit:

https://apply.une.edu.au/app/answers/detail/a_id/381/~information-about-refunds-for-fees

https://apply.une.edu.au/app/answers/detail/a_id/2179

- If you are feeling stressed, use your support networks. Friends and family are great to lean on. UNE also has free counselling or our website has links to many online mental health services.

How to apply

You have 12 months from the date you withdrew, or if you didn't withdraw, from the end of Trimester to apply for Reversal of Debt.

The application is submitted in an online form found here:

https://apply.une.edu.au/app/answers/detail/a_id/2179

The form is not compatible with mobile phone or tablet devices so should be completed on a personal computer. You will be required to login with your UNE student login. If your email is inactive you will need to contact IT on 67735000 to have it reactivated.

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The application

There are two parts to a Reversal of Debt application:

1. Three questions you need to address
2. Independent supporting documentation which provides evidence for your answers to the questions

Three Questions:

a. What are your special circumstances?

Your special circumstances must be beyond your control and unusual, uncommon, or abnormal which a reasonable person would consider is not due to your action or inaction either direct or indirect.

b. When did your special circumstances occur?

Your special circumstances must occur after the census date or where it did occur before the census date you must demonstrate that it worsened significantly after census.

c. How did your special circumstances prevent you from completing the unit requirements?

Your special circumstances must make it impracticable to complete the unit requirements during the study period.

The legislation distinguishes between circumstances that made study 'difficult or challenging' versus those that made it 'impractical' which is taken to mean 'not capable of being done'. In assessing applications, consideration is also given as to whether it was already impractical to meet the unit requirements at the time the special circumstances arose.

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In this context, impractical means you were genuinely unable to:

- *Undertake the necessary private study required;*
- *Attend sufficient lectures or tutorials, or meet other compulsory attendance requirements;*
- *Complete the required assessable work;*
- *Sit the required examinations; or*
- *Complete the compulsory unit requirements because of your inability to meet all of the above.*

Supporting Documentation

Your Reversal of Debt application **requires** independent documentation that supports your statement. The documentation needed will depend on your individual circumstances.

Acceptable supporting documentation includes (but is not limited to):

Medical or Health related circumstances

A letter or certificate from a doctor or specialist, stating:

- The date your condition was diagnosed or changed AND
- The effect your condition has had on your ability to study AND
- The date or time frame when it became apparent you could not continue your studies.

** A medical certificate without all of the above information will not substantiate a claim for special circumstances.

Personal or family related circumstances

- An official copy of a relevant Birth or Death Certificate, funeral notice/pamphlet
- An official report or evidence statement (as provided by police, an insurer, or similar)
- A signed or certified letter or statement from an attending doctor or specialist, a psychologist or counsellor, or another professional or independent member of the community, with relevance to the circumstance

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Any relevant documentation should state or provide evidence of:

- The date your circumstances changed, or the date the situation or event had occurred AND
- Specific details outlining the circumstance which impacted you, including the date or time frame when it became apparent that this change in circumstance made it impracticable to complete your studies or compulsory unit requirements

Employment related circumstances

- A letter from your employer notifying you of your change of conditions, including the date this change has taken effect
- A letter from your employer stating that you have been disadvantaged by the changing arrangements, to the extent that you are unable to complete your studies or compulsory unit requirements

Contact us:

Send us an email:
advocacy@une.edu.au

Reach us by phone:
6773 3116

