



## Fees Free Extension

December 2021

# Fees Free Extension

## Overview

Fees Free allows people to undertake education and training to help build their skills, with no cost to enrolment – making it easier for everyone to increase their level of education.

This programme provides greater opportunity for people to upskill and increase their human capital – which will benefit both themselves as individuals and the nation as a whole. By removing enrolment fees this opens up the chance to study to more people.

This programme is being funded under the Economic Recovery Roadmap (ERR).

## Who can utilise Fees Free?

Anyone resident in the Cook Islands is eligible for the Fees Free programme. That is, both Cook Islanders and those on work permits.

## What is covered under Fees Free?

Fees Free will ensure the tuition fees for the offered courses are reduced to \$0 for students. However, this does not cover additional learning costs such as books, stationery or any associated student services fees (administration/student association fees). Students will be expected to personally cover these additional learning costs.

There is a mechanism by which students may become liable for the fees of the course. Upon enrolment in a course, the terms of the subsidy are that if neither of the following criteria are met, government reserves the right to collect the value of the fees from the student. The relevant criteria are:

- Criteria 1: Students shall maintain an attendance record of at least 70% for course classes they are enrolled in (unless there is a documented explanation for absence such as medical certification).
- Criteria 2: Successful completion of the course.

If either or both of the criteria are met, then the student is not liable for the fees. For this, enrolling students will sign up to the terms and conditions which cover these criteria.



## Where are courses offered?

Courses eligible for Fees Free are offered at:

- Cook Islands Tertiary Training Institute (CITTI)
- University of the South Pacific (USP) – Cook Islands campus
- Centre of Excellence in Information Technology (CEIT)

## When is Fees Free available

For new students at USP and CITTI, the Fees Free programme will be available on courses from January 1, 2022 (this includes summer school courses, beginning on January 4, 2022). The programme is intended to provide for continuing students to access the support for courses in Semester 2, 2022 as well. This amount will need to be accrued at the end of the 2021/22 financial year.

As CEIT is a different type of institution (with only self-contained courses), new students can join courses from Semester 2, 2021 – beginning in August 2021.

For students who are continuing courses they have begun previously under Fees Free, they will have been able to access courses at all three institutions as they continued their studies in Semester 2, 2021. For clarity, this only applies to students who began under the previous Fees Free programme.

## What happens for students who have programmes continue past June 2022?

For students in programmes which are only partly completed by the end of the Fees Free Programme, continued support will depend on their path of study. For those in Certificate or Diploma programmes which have a total duration of 18 months or less, the Fees Free Programme will continue to support the remaining component of the programme. That is, ***for students signing up to Certificate or Diploma programmes, the Fees Free Programme will pay for the cost of the whole programme.***

Further support for ongoing study is subject to any renewal of the Fees Free Initiative (or subsequent programme).

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## Eligible Courses

- Certificate level courses
- Diploma level courses
- Undergraduate degree level courses (partial - see below)

### Certificate level courses

These courses are offered at all three institutions, and are considered the first level of post-secondary education. They can be offered as pathways to qualifications (including diplomas, and degrees), or one-off, self-contained courses.

The Certificate courses at CITTI are at a range of levels – with courses available at Levels 2, 3 and 4 under the Fees Free Programme (at a minimum of 40 credits per course). The Level 2 courses are aimed to be part of a pathway to further study for prospective students, where the prospective students do not have the required background.

USP offers a range of Undergraduate Certificates which are Level 7 qualifications under the International Standard Classification of Education (ISCED), which can be used as a pathway to a diploma or degree. The university also offers Pacific TAFE Certificates (Level 4) which can be 'stair-cased' to a diploma, but not a degree.

Certificate courses at USP and CEIT are priced at \$430 per course.

At CITTI, the cost varies between \$600 and \$1,000 per course.

For Certificate courses which begin in the eligible period, but carry on past the 2021/22 Financial Year, those students will continue to have the fees for their course covered by the programme. However, this will not be open to any new students.

### Diploma level courses

Diploma courses (Level 5 at CITTI and Levels 5 and 7 at USP) are offered at both CITTI and USP, with USP also offering a pathway from diploma to degree (through Level 7 courses). These courses are pitched at a more demanding and advanced level of training than the certificate level courses and have differing entry requirements

The cost of these courses at USP ranges between \$315 and \$645 per course, while Diploma level courses at CITTI cost \$1,000.

For Diploma courses which begin in the eligible period, but carry on past the 2021/22 Financial Year, those students will continue to have the fees for their course covered by the programme. However, this will not be open to any new students.

### Undergraduate degree courses

Undergraduate (or Bachelor) degrees are only offered at USP, and are made up of 24 courses (usually across 3 years if able to study full time). These are Level 7 courses under ISCED.

The cost of the courses which contribute to a Bachelor degree ranges between \$415 and \$615 each.

*Eligibility for undergraduate degree courses*

This programme is open to both newly enrolling students, and existing Bachelor students – but only covers one year of study (not the entire degree- on average a cost of \$4,160 for first- and second- year students, or \$4,560 for third-year students). For students studying part-time<sup>1</sup>, this covers an equivalent of one year of full-time study (usually eight papers), however this is only available until the end of the 2023/24 financial year (ending on June 30 2024) – providing five semesters of eligibility to take up to eight papers.

*For new Bachelor students, they will need to be made aware that the Fees Free Programme only covers the first year – and the fees for second and third years will need to be covered through another means.*

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## How to apply

The Fees Free Programme does not require application, the enrolment fees for eligible courses are simply reduced to zero.

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## For further information contact the course providers below

### **Cook Islands Tertiary Training Institute (CITTI)**

Email – [study@citti.edu.ck](mailto:study@citti.edu.ck)

Website – [www.citti.edu.ck](http://www.citti.edu.ck)

### **University of the South Pacific (USP) – Cook Island campus**

Email – [cook.islands@usp.ac.fj](mailto:cook.islands@usp.ac.fj)

Website - [www.usp.ac.fj/usp-cook-islands/](http://www.usp.ac.fj/usp-cook-islands/)

### **Centre of Excellence in Information Technology (CEIT)**

Email – [ci-ceit@usp.ac.fj](mailto:ci-ceit@usp.ac.fj)

Website – [www.ci-ceit.edu.ck](http://www.ci-ceit.edu.ck)

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<sup>1</sup> At least one paper per semester