



Australian Government
Department of Education,
Science and Training

support for overseas study

OS-HELP



www.goingtouni.gov.au

What is OS-HELP?

OS-HELP is a loan that assists eligible students, who are based in Australia, to undertake some of their study overseas. Students may receive up to \$5,000 per six-month study period for one or two overseas study periods.

These loans will help students with a range of expenses, such as airfares and accommodation.

Who is eligible for an OS-HELP loan?

There are a number of criteria that a student must meet to be eligible for an OS-HELP loan. The main criteria are that a student must be:

- an Australian citizen or the holder of a permanent humanitarian visa;
- a Commonwealth supported student enrolled in an undergraduate course of study; and
- selected by their higher education provider to receive an OS-HELP loan.

Students cannot receive an OS-HELP loan for the first or last year (equivalent full-time) of their course of study. The overseas study undertaken must count as credit towards the course of study at the home provider.

Students undertaking their whole course outside Australia are not eligible for OS-HELP.

More details about the eligibility requirements for OS-HELP are available in the *OS-HELP statement of terms and conditions*, which is available from your higher education provider or on the *Going to Uni* website at www.goingtouni.gov.au.

Can a student receive an OS-HELP loan for overseas study shorter than six months?

Yes, OS-HELP is available for study periods of less than six months but students cannot receive an OS-HELP loan more than once for a given six month period. Students may only receive a maximum of two OS-HELP loans over their lifetime.

How do students apply for an OS-HELP loan?

Students apply to their higher education provider for an OS-HELP loan. The provider will assess the student's application against the eligibility criteria set by legislation and any other selection criteria that the provider may set.

Is a loan fee applied to OS-HELP loans?

Yes. A 20% loan fee is applied to each OS-HELP loan when the OS-HELP loan is paid to the student. For example, if a student borrows \$5,000, they will receive \$5,000 but their recorded debt will be \$6,000 (that is, 120% x \$5,000).

How are OS-HELP debts repaid?

OS-HELP debts are added to a person's accumulated HELP debt (which includes any HECS or HECS-HELP debts). HELP debts are repaid through the tax system when the person's income exceeds the minimum repayment threshold, which will be \$36,184 in the 2005-06 financial year. People can also make voluntary repayments on their debts directly to the Tax Office. Voluntary repayments of \$500 or more will attract a 10% bonus.

Is any interest charged on OS-HELP debts?

HELP debts, which include OS-HELP debts, are indexed each year by movements in the Consumer Price Index (CPI) to maintain their real value, but are otherwise interest free.

More information

For more information on OS-HELP, including how to apply, contact your higher education provider's student exchange or study abroad office.

For general information on OS-HELP, visit the *Going to Uni* website at www.goingtouni.gov.au or call 1800 020 108.



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