



## FAQs: Fees Free Initiative

### Introduction

This document provides answers to common questions on the fees free courses being rolled out to support businesses and employees under the Government's COVID-19 Economic Response Plan, Phase II. It should be read in conjunction with the *Fees Free Initiative* factsheet available on the MFEM website (<http://www.mfem.gov.ck/economic-planning/erp-phase-ii>).

### Fees Free

#### What is the Fees Free Initiative?

The Fees Free Initiative offers fully subsidised fees of eligible courses delivered locally through the Cook Islands Tertiary Institute (CITTI), and the University of the South Pacific Cook Islands Campus (USP Cook Islands). All accredited courses at CITTI are available under this scheme, and a select number of certificate courses are eligible at USP Cook Islands for Semester 2 from June to December 2020 (see Fees Free Fact Sheet for list of courses).

#### What is the deadline for enrolling in courses under the Fees Free Initiative?

Enrolment deadlines vary depending on the course. At USP, applications for Semester 2 and Winter Flexi School close 24 July (manual submissions) or 27 July (online admissions). The Centre for Excellence in Information Technology (CEIT) will publicise enrolment deadlines depending on the course schedule. At CITTI, enrolments are accepted up to first day of the course if space is still available. Early enrolment is encouraged.

#### How long will Fees Free be available?

Fees Free applies during Semester 2 for courses commencing between June to December 2020.

#### What if my course will not be completed by December 2020?

Courses may continue through to the end of semester 2 in December 2020, and some into 2021. The Fees Free Initiative will only subsidise costs until December 2020, however, payment plans for fees may be available to support learners in finishing a qualification.



## How many free courses can I enrol in?

There are no restrictions on how many fees free courses you can enrol in, as long as there is still space left in the courses.

## What do I do if I'm eligible for fees free courses but am already enrolled in study or training?

If the training or study programme that you are currently enrolled in is on the list of approved fees free courses beginning from June 2020, then your fees will be covered between the period June to December 2020.

## What if the course I would like to enrol in is full?

Courses are available on a first-come, first-served basis. If the desired course is full, applicants can choose a second, or third option. Interest in desired courses should be registered with CITTI or USP for consideration of additional offerings.

## What if the fees free courses offered do not meet the needs of my business?

Courses offered by CITTI and USP are chosen based on national and regional education priorities that address training needs and recognised skills gaps. If courses are not relevant to a particular business, and you wish to apply for the Training Subsidy, you may choose other online courses or third-party training courses offered by a provider approved by the Ministry of Education. See the Wage and Training Subsidy Fact Sheet for information on approved training providers.

## Do training courses offered by other local providers qualify for fees free?

No, Fees Free only applies for courses offered by USP and CITTI. Fees free will only apply for other courses if the provider partners with CITTI to carry out the training as part of its fees free course offering accessible to all learners.

## What are my options if I would like to enrol several employees on the training subsidy and the desired fees free courses are full?

Businesses with a higher number of staff that have particular needs may find benefit in carrying out in-house training through CITTI's Business Partnership Model, rather than having employees enrol in individual courses. In-house training, such as through online courses or third-party training, must be from an approved provider to meet quality assurance standards for this scheme (please refer to the Training Subsidy Fact Sheet and FAQ).

## Are fees free courses also accessible to those receiving the Unemployment Benefit or Emergency Hardship Fund?

Yes, fees free courses are accessible to all Cook Islands residents. Recipients of the unemployment benefit and emergency hardship fund are encouraged to enrol in fees free courses where possible, to upskill themselves and improve employment opportunities.

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