

International College of Hotel Management INC.

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International College of
Hotel Management

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Submission requesting a change to the Higher Education Support Amendment (Extending FEE-HELP for VET Diploma and VET Advanced Diploma Courses) Bill 2007.

The Government's Budget speech for 2007 introduced the principle of making FEE-HELP available for Vocational Education. The Budget was followed up by the introduction of the above bill into Parliament on June 21st 2007. Both the Budget speech and the above bill specifically stated that FEE-HELP in the VET sector would be limited to diploma and advanced diploma programs.

For many years the two most senior vocational qualifications were the diploma and the advanced diploma. But in 2005 the Australian Qualification Framework was amended by adding two more vocational qualifications. There were the Vocational Graduate Certificate and the Vocational Graduate Diploma. These are classified as AQF Level 8 and 9 respectively.

Since 1993 ICHM has offered the Swiss Hotel Association (SHA) Diploma and the ICHM Bachelor degree. Between 1993 and 2006 our SHA Diploma was assessed to be an advanced diploma. But increasingly the assessors were concerned that the program had significantly more content than an advanced diploma. Our 2005-6 reaccreditation coincided with the introduction of the Vocational Graduate Diploma, and our SHA diploma was reaccredited at that level.

In 2005 ICHM was approved as a Higher Education Provider (HEP), and thus our Australian degree students (undertaking the Fourth Year of study at ICHM) could access FEE-HELP to finance their studies.

With the changes proposed in the above Bill, (assuming ICHM is approved as a vocational education provider for FEE-HELP), Australian students will be able to borrow in their First Year and Second Year, as these courses lead to a Diploma and Advanced Diploma respectively.

But based on the legislation as presently intended, students would not be able to apply for funding in the Third Year, as Vocational Graduate Diploma courses are not covered by the Bill.

We are delighted that the concept of FEE-HELP for VET was introduced at this time. It will be very beneficial for all our Australian students. But the idea that students could borrow for Year 1, Year 2, and Year 4, but not year 3 is bizarre. It looks like someone overlooked the qualifications of Vocational Graduate Certificate and Vocational Graduate Diploma.

It has been suggested that we should re-register our course so we commence our degree immediately after the advanced diploma. If we did this we would allow students to get funding from Higher Education FEE-HELP. But we want to be able to register our course as we think it is most appropriate, and not with access to FEE-HELP as the priority.

We ask you to widen the scope of FEE-HELP for VET, so the Vocational Graduate diploma is included.

Gerald Lipman
Chief Executive
Monday July 9, 2007

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