

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions] QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000041

Senator Mehreen Faruqi on 24 September 2024, Proof Hansard page 48

Cost-of-living relief

Question

Senator FARUQI: Good afternoon, everyone. Many people have raised today, and it is my view as well, that the HELP and HECS changes proposed by this legislation we're inquiring into, which shaves off some of the indexation which has already been applied to student debts, do not provide any cost-of-living relief to students. I'm just wondering if your department has done any work on that, to suggest that it does give cost-of-living relief.

Ms Morton: The government's policy was in response to the accord panel's recommendation 16d, which was to look at how it could make HELP indexation arrangements simpler and fairer for students. That specific recommendation talked about the changes that the government has adopted. We haven't done any specific modelling in the context beyond what the accord process looked at. I am happy to take that on notice; I wasn't here when the accord work was done. But the government's budget measure was in direct response to recommendation 16d.

Senator FARUQI: It was, and it was touted as cost-of-living relief. It would be good if you could look at that. If you have numbers, tell me how much money the more than three million people who have a HECS debt are getting back in their pockets, and who they are.

Ms Morton: We are happy to take that on notice. As you've already reflected, it's a \$3 billion measure that reaches—

Senator FARUQI: I was talking about the three million people.

Ms Morton: Three million people, yes.

Answer

The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) published statistics on the HELP Program on 16 September 2024 <https://data.gov.au/data/dataset/higher-education-loan-program-help>. This includes information on outstanding HELP by age and gender and information on HELP repayment incomes.

The Department of Education (the department) summarised key elements of this data in its submission to the Committee.

As outlined in the department's submission to the Committee, according to the ATO, approximately 3.2 million HELP and other ICL debtors had indexation applied to their loans across 2023 and 2024 which is broken down in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Number of people who had indexation applied to an ICL account (2023, 2024)^(a)

Indexation event	Number of people
Indexation applied 1 June 2023 and 1 June 2024	2,800,000
Indexation applied 1 June 2023 only	220,000
Indexation applied 1 June 2024 only	190,000
Total	3,210,000

Source: ATO

a. Note all figures are approximations and subject to change as new loan data is regularly received from education providers which changes the status of accounts.

According to ATO data, as at July 2024, approximately 200,000 people have fully repaid their HELP debt since indexation was applied on 1 June 2023. Some of these may receive a refund depending on their individual circumstances.

The department is unable to estimate the size of these refunds as it requires the ATO to assess their entitlement according to their individual circumstances.

The department notes that all figures are approximations from the ATO and subject to change as new loan data is regularly received from education providers which changes the status of accounts.

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Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000042

Senator Mehreen Faruqi on 24 September 2024, Proof Hansard page 50

Size of the full cohort

Question

Senator FARUQI: From what I understand, the government's proposal, which is the Commonwealth prac payment proposal, would cover 73,000 students in those three fields, as it stands.

Ms Morton: That's correct. That's VET and higher-ed students.

Senator FARUQI: That's right. Is that the number of students that you have estimated in those fields, or is it that there are more and you've used the eligibility criteria to assess how many would be eligible for that payment?

Ms Morton: We looked at a cohort and we made some assumptions based on eligibility. Again, the intent from the government was to get this funding to the people who need it the most.

Senator FARUQI: What is the cohort?

Ms Morton: Sorry, do you mean in terms of the numbers?

Senator FARUQI: If 73,000 is the assessment that you have made after applying eligibility criteria, what size is the full cohort?

Mr Nordstrom: We might have to take that one on notice.

Ms Morton: Yes. Sorry, I don't think I've got that detail with me.

Senator FARUQI: You're here for this inquiry, so it would be nice to have that detail, if you could give us that

Answer

While the Department of Education does not routinely collect data regarding the total number of students that are undertaking a mandatory placement each year as part of their higher education study, 2022 verified Tertiary Collection of Student Information (TCSI) data indicates that higher education student enrolment numbers are as follows:

Course name and level	Domestic TCSI Higher Education Enrolments (2022)
Nursing	62,410
Midwifery	4,914
Teacher Education	90,999
Social Work	17,380

For the Diploma of Nursing qualification, over 5,000 Vocational Education and Training (VET) students will access the Commonwealth Prac Payment (CPP) per year, based on figures from National Centre for Vocational Education Research – NCVET 2023 – Total VET students and courses 2022.

Final numbers of students are likely to vary from the above as it is not possible to predict changes in enrolments and take up of CPP which will be driven by student choice.

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Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000043

Senator Mehreen Faruqi on 24 September 2024, Proof Hansard page 50

Number of students who have been excluded from prac payment—students in vet science, pharmacy, psychology, youth work, occupational therapy

Question

Senator FARUQI: ...I have another question, which I asked on notice some four or five months ago and which I still don't have an answer for: what is the number of students who have been excluded from this payment—students in vet science, pharmacy, psychology, youth work, occupational therapy?

Ms Morton: I'd have to take that on notice as well.

Senator FARUQI: The department took it on notice four months ago and I still don't have an answer.

Answer

Higher education students in teaching, nursing, midwifery and social work with mandatory placements are included in the scope of the payment. There are no exclusions.

Data about enrolments by course are available for the 2023 year at the following link:
<https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education-statistics/student-data/selected-higher-education-statistics-2023-student-datat>.

The Department of Education does not hold data regarding the numbers of students that are undertaking mandatory placements as part of their higher education course.

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Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000044

Senator Sarah Henderson on 24 September 2024, Proof Hansard page 53

The Department's and the Minister's draft comments on the final Universities Accord report

Question

Senator HENDERSON: Could you do so? Around about a year ago, I asked for the department's and the minister's draft comments on the final Universities Accord report. I'm still waiting for that to be provided on notice. Has that been given? Have those answers to my questions on notice been given to the minister?

Ms Morton: I'd have to take that on notice. Sorry, I don't have that information.

Senator HENDERSON: I'm not reflecting on you as the officials of the department, but when you talk about the Universities Accord recommendations, I would put it to you that the minister has had a very heavy hand in curating that report and that's why the government is not handing over the draft final report from before the final report was released, including all of the commentary. I would ask, as a matter of urgency, that these drafts be provided to our committee so we can properly understand and interrogate these bills and do our job.

Ms Morton: I understand. I am happy to take it on notice.

Senator HENDERSON: I have raised this with Mr Cook. I note that he's again not here today. But I would ask that you please provide what we ask for on notice. I'm not saying 'you' directly, but the department or the minister has failed to provide these draft agreements and the feedback on the draft report and the final report on notice. I am extremely suspicious that everything that has come out of this Universities Accord report is being curated by the minister—that seems to be the evidence to date—and I would like you to please provide this information that we have sought, as a matter of urgency.

Ms Morton: And I have indicated that I will take that on notice—

Answer

On the Department of Education's draft comments on the Accord Final Report, please refer to SQ24-000336.

The Accord Panel Chair met with the Minister regularly to discuss progress on the Accord Final Report.

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions] QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000045

Senator Sarah Henderson on 24 September 2024, Proof Hansard page 54

Details and results of consultation

Question

Senator HENDERSON: What I'm asking is: what sort of consultation was conducted, and how will the government deliver this sort of requirement when many universities have said they do not have the ability to move this sort of money to a student union?

Ms Morton: The first part of your question, I think, was about the consultation that has occurred. We had an open session with all universities. I think we had about 150—

Ms Hinds: We had 158 attendees.

Ms Morton: We had 158 attendees, and we talked through the government's intent and—

Senator HENDERSON: On notice—sorry to interrupt—could you please provide the results of that consultation.

Ms Morton: I'm happy to talk to the high level things now and to follow that up, Senator—whatever is helpful to you.

CHAIR: There's a bit of a problem. There's a question that was asked. You can answer that question. If there are additional questions that follow, it would be helpful—

Senator HENDERSON: Sure.

CHAIR: Not when an answer's being given to a question. It would just be of assistance for me to be able to keep track of questions.

Senator HENDERSON: Just very briefly, could you summarise. We've got very, very limited time.

Ms Morton: I understand that, and I'm happy to take the detail on notice. Our session that we had, with 158 representatives from universities, went to the detail of how this measure would be implemented. We got some really good feedback around preparedness, and that is reflected in the bill, where there are transition arrangements that can be sought: three years if you're a table A provider and five years if you're a non-table-A provider. There also was strong support and understanding that this was student funding and should be provided—

Answer

Consultation undertaken

As part of the Australian Universities Accord Review of Australia's Higher Education System, the review panel engaged extensively over 12 months across the higher education sector, with students, staff, researchers, industry, businesses, professions and governments to examine a range of issues.

In addition, the Department of Education met with key stakeholders on the proposed SSAF measure with consultation sessions held in July and August 2024, including:

- a collective meeting with 158 representatives across all 49 providers that collect SSAF;

- 16 separate engagements with higher education providers, student associations and organisations providing student services, that had engaged with the department about the proposal prior to the introduction of the *Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024*;
- consultation with Western Australian universities with state-based legislation already requiring an allocation of 50 per cent of SSAF to student guilds; and
- individual meetings with peak representative bodies including Universities Australia, the National Tertiary Education Union, the Student Engagement Network and the National Union of Students.

Results of the consultations

Issues raised by stakeholders throughout July and August are reflected in the Explanatory Memorandum.

Through these consultations, some higher education providers identified they may need time to adjust to and implement the new requirements. Accordingly, Section 19-40 of the proposed Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 sets out transition arrangements that providers are able to apply to the Secretary of the Department of Education for.

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Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000046

Senator Sarah Henderson on 24 September 2024, Proof Hansard page 55

Student services and amenities fee collected by each university / the amounts that currently goes to student organisations

Question

Senator HENDERSON: Thank you. Can you provide a list of the amount of the student services and amenities fee collected by each university and how much of that currently goes to student organisations?

Ms Morton: Yes. We may have that information with us now.

Senator HENDERSON: I've asked for a list of every university, so maybe you could just provide that on notice.

Ms Morton: If you would prefer us to take it on notice, we're happy to take that on notice for you.

Answer

Universities that currently charge a SSAF are provided in the table below, along with data from individual 2023 SSAF Allocation Reports that providers are required to publish.

Provider name	2023 SSAF revenue	2023 SSAF revenue allocated to student-led organisations
Australian Catholic University	\$8,105,889	\$50,000
Australian National University	\$5,934,416	\$4,675,764
Central Queensland University	\$4,218,031	Not reported by provider
Charles Darwin University	\$2,221,000	Not reported by provider
Charles Sturt University	\$4,856,474	Not reported by provider
Curtin University	\$6,410,611	Not reported by provider
Deakin University	\$8,098,919	\$4,145,000
Edith Cowan University	\$3,730,360	\$1,865,180
Federation University	\$2,016,224	Not reported by provider
Flinders University	\$4,611,554	\$534,000
Griffith University	\$9,814,196	\$3,000,000
James Cook University	\$3,466,603	\$1,243,891
La Trobe University	\$8,639,084	\$1,542,703
Macquarie University	\$10,554,434	\$1,231,968
Monash University	\$11,915,840	\$4,729,335
Murdoch University	\$3,697,709	\$1,831,102
Queensland University of Technology	\$8,921,000	\$2,273,000

RMIT University	\$14,186,064	\$3,741,000
Southern Cross University	\$2,919,888	\$1,378,405
Swinburne University	\$6,119,000	\$2,553,500
University of Adelaide	\$7,599,561	\$4,309,678
University of Canberra	\$4,211,757	Not reported by provider
University of Melbourne	\$20,352,140	\$15,830,746
University of New England	\$3,461,552	Not reported by provider
University of New South Wales	\$15,269,000	\$5,622,000
University of Newcastle	\$6,915,808	\$2,571,345
University of Notre Dame Australia ¹	Not reported by provider	Not reported by provider
University of Queensland	\$14,260,519	\$9,236,649
University of South Australia	\$4,603,088	\$2,154,327
University of Southern Queensland	\$3,445,698	Not reported by provider
University of Sydney	\$20,307,547	\$17,170,327
University of Tasmania	\$4,798,929	\$882,000
University of Technology Sydney	\$10,757,499	\$5,729,000
University of the Sunshine Coast	\$4,327,679	\$381,727
University of Western Australia	\$6,852,259	\$5,139,193
University of Wollongong	\$5,558,304	\$691,900
Victoria University	\$5,296,332	\$522,100
Western Sydney University	\$10,828,948	Not reported by provider
Avondale University	\$19,3280	Not reported by provider
Bond University	\$1,054,080	\$551,564

¹ Started charging a SSAF in 2024.

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000047

Senator Matt O'Sullivan on 24 September 2024, Proof Hansard page 57,58

Eligible income support payments

Question

Senator O'SULLIVAN: Okay. Can you talk us through the eligibility criteria for people to see the payment? You've stated that a person would need to be in receipt of an income support payment. What income support payments would be eligible?

Ms Morton: I might ask Mr Nordstrom to give you the detail of the specific payments.

Mr Nordstrom: That would be any primary income support payment. That would include students who are on Austudy, Abstudy, youth allowance or other, which makes up about 19 per cent of students, or it might include other forms of primary payment. We note that in some of these courses we have more mature-age students. Some of them might be on other forms of government assistance. All of those would be eligible.

Senator O'SULLIVAN: What about any of the supplementary payments, like rental assistance and carers allowance?

Mr Nordstrom: Without wanting to pretend to be an expert on DSS payments, I would note that I think Commonwealth rent assistance is usually a payment you get if you're already on another form of payment. So it would be the other payment that would make you eligible for CPP.

Senator O'SULLIVAN: Okay. I'm sure you're right, but can you just check that and come back to us if that's incorrect?

Mr Nordstrom: I'm happy to take that on notice.

Answer

Income support payments are defined in section 23(1) of the *Social Security Act 1991* and do not include supplements. Supplementary payments like rental assistance, without an income support payment, would not constitute eligibility for the Commonwealth Prac Payment based on the income support payments criterion.

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Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000048

The Committee on 24 September 2024, Proof Hansard page 58,61

Copy of the draft guidelines

Question

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Senator O'SULLIVAN: And the draft guidelines that you've got: can we get a copy of those, please?

Mr Nordstrom: We have a working group that we put together with representatives from the sector and representatives of the student voice to work through the detail of those guidelines to make sure that it captures all the key material. That is still under development, as Ms Morgan has indicated.

Senator HENDERSON: Can we just get a copy of those working documents in relation to the guidelines?

Ms Morton: I think we'll need to take that on notice.

Senator HENDERSON: Yes. Take that on notice.

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Senator HENDERSON: If you could just come back to us on that and also on the guidelines. I just want to flag very serious concerns that the minister is proposing to have so much of the detail of this bill embedded in the guidelines. We are seeking, and I am seeking, a copy of the guidelines, and we will be requiring those guidelines before we can possibly consider the bill in the Senate. So I ask for a copy of the guidelines or the draft guidelines in relation to this bill.

Ms Morton: We have taken that on notice. As I think I expressed to Senator Faruqi, we're hopeful of having those guidelines available for Senate debate and consideration.

Answer

Amendments to the Higher Education (Other Grant) Guidelines for the Commonwealth Prac Payment (CPP) are under development in consultation with the sector.

The release of the guidelines is a matter for Government.

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000049

The Committee on 24 September 2024, Proof Hansard page 59

Privacy work/ impact assessment

Question

Senator O'SULLIVAN: Was there a privacy impact assessment undertaken for these payments?

Mr Nordstrom: I would need to take that on notice.

Ms Morton: I think we'll have to take that on notice. I can't—

Senator O'SULLIVAN: There's been some concern expressed. There's obviously a unique relationship between the provider and the student; it's a teacher-student environment. Now, in order to be eligible for this, they're having to disclose their private and sensitive information—income and other status. Isn't that something that really should be looked at and considered—the privacy implications of this?

Mr Nordstrom: Sorry, I wasn't suggesting that we haven't looked at it; I'm just saying I would need to confirm whether or not we had advice that said a full impact analysis was not required. You've made the point that students already have a range of detailed engagements with their education provider, in this case higher education providers. If they're using the HELP or FEE-HELP system, for example, even internationally protected information about the student, like the tax file number, is already held by the university. So the idea of a university holding—

Senator O'SULLIVAN: The tax file number isn't revealing of a person's—

Mr Nordstrom: No. We have international obligations, under tax law, to maintain the confidentiality of that. I was just using that as an example of the type of sensitive information.

Senator HENDERSON: Can you provide that on notice—the privacy work that you've done?

Ms Morton: We're happy to provide that on notice.

Answer

Please refer to response to IQ24-000071.

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions] QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000050

Senator Sarah Henderson on 24 September 2024, Proof Hansard page 60

Provision in the bill that allows Universities to work on a solution

Question

Senator HENDERSON: 'Outside the transition period, we do not have the ability for a student organisation to provide these critical services to students'? What does the university do then?

Ms Morton: I was getting to that point, Senator; thank you. I was just about to say we have close contact with our universities. They would normally come to us and tell us that they weren't in a position to do that, otherwise they would be in breach of the HESA legislation.

Senator HENDERSON: So will they be in breach?

Ms Morton: They would be in breach if they're not able to do that and if they had not come to us and worked on a solution with us around that.

Senator HENDERSON: So where is the provision in the bill that allows them to work on a solution?

Ms Morton: It's a general provision. I think it's under division 19.

Senator HENDERSON: Could you provide that on notice.

Ms Morton: I'm happy to.

Answer

As noted in the evidence provided to the Committee, where issues have been identified by providers, they are encouraged to proactively work with the Department of Education (the department) prior to notices being issued for potential non-compliance with the legislation.

If it was the case that a provider was not complying with the requirements for SSAF as set out in the *Higher Education Support Act (HESA) 2003*, and it had not already alerted the department to this matter and sought its advice to remediate this non-compliance, Section 19-82 of the HESA allows the Minister (or his delegate) to issue a formal compliance notice to the provider, specifying the details of the non-compliance and the actions required to remedy this, within a reasonable period of time.

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000051

Senator Sarah Henderson on 24 September 2024, Proof Hansard page 60,61

Prac payments for student teachers in relation to Queensland's prac payments

Question

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Senator HENDERSON: The other concern I have about prac payments for student teachers is in relation to Queensland. Queensland has announced that it will pay student teachers for their prac placements. How will this intersect with the Commonwealth payment? Will those student teachers still be eligible for the Commonwealth payment?

Ms Morton: We're working through that. We certainly are aware that states and territories have a range of complementary initiatives. What it will essentially come down to is the nature of the payment is. You've given an example there—

Senator HENDERSON: I've just given you the example. Will a student teacher still be eligible for the Commonwealth payment?

Ms Morton: We would need to look at the detail of the Queensland offering and whether or not it was actually going to specifically pay them while they were doing their practicum placement. With respect, I haven't seen the detail of the Queensland arrangement. We know that there are some who provide parking and travel. We know there are some who provide accommodation. It will very much depend on the nature of the—

Senator HENDERSON: It sounds like a—

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CHAIR: Could we have a final question, as we are now over time.

Senator HENDERSON: Okay. Could you provide the details on notice. I respectfully say to you that maybe you haven't worked that out. Queensland is going to pay a \$5,000 payment, so I would have thought that you would have considered that and been able to give clarity, given we're about to look at passing the bill. That's now going to be—

Ms Morton: I'm happy to take that on notice—

Answer

Refer to IQ24-000069

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000052

Senator Sarah Henderson provided in writing.

Commonwealth Prac Payment - eligibility

Question

What is the eligibility criteria for people to be able to receive this payment?

Answer

The new Commonwealth Prac Payment (CPP) will provide up to 68,000 eligible Commonwealth supported higher education students and over 5,000 eligible VET students with financial relief of \$319.50 a week for domestic students undertaking mandatory practicum placements in Bachelor or Masters qualifications in teaching, nursing and midwifery, and social work.

The new payment will be available to eligible students on Australian Government income support, and those students who need to work more than 15 hours per week during their normal university studies.

Further information can be found in the CPP factsheet at:

<https://www.education.gov.au/higher-education/commonwealth-prac-payment>.

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**Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]
QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000053

Senator Sarah Henderson provided in writing.

Collection of Student Services and Amenities Fees

Question

Please provide a list of the amount of SSAF collected by each provider each year. How much is collected from international students? Please provide this by provider, breaking down the amount collected as well as the number of students enrolled at each provider.

Answer

Refer to IQ24-000046 for a list of SSAF revenue collected by each provider from domestic students.

The department does not currently collect information on how much SSAF revenue is collected from international students.

The number of international students enrolled with each higher education provider is published annually as part of the Higher Education Student statistical collection. Please refer to www.education.gov.au/higher-education-statistics/resources/2023-section-7-overseas-students.

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000054

Senator Sarah Henderson provided in writing.

Commonwealth Prac Payment - University verification of student in receipt of payment

Question

Will universities be required to verify the person is still in current receipt of such a payment and if so how will this be done?

Answer

If applying for the Commonwealth Prac Payment and indicating they are in receipt of an income support payment, individuals would need to provide evidence to higher education providers that they are currently in receipt of this. This evidence can be obtained through myGov, and providers can also access information through Centrelink Confirmation eServices (CCeS).

Information on CCeS can be found at: <https://www.servicesaustralia.gov.au/how-centrelink-confirmation-eservices-works?context=23281#a2>.

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QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000055

Senator Sarah Henderson provided in writing.

Consistent Provision of Services to Students

Question

There has been concerns raised about high staff turnover of student unions, associations and guilds. How will you ensure consistent provision of services to students under these new arrangements to ensure no student is worse off and that support services do not decline?

Answer

In allocating this 40 per cent of revenue, higher education providers will need to ensure that the student-led organisations they are allocating this to are able to deliver services consistent with those services set out in Section 19-38 (4) of the *Higher Education Support Act (HESA) 2003*.

This is consistent with arrangements that have been in place under HESA since 2012.

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000056

Senator Sarah Henderson provided in writing.

Commonwealth Prac Payment - details of the 'need to work' means test requirement

Question

Please outline the details of the 'need to work' means test requirement.

- a. Will students in receipt of an income support payment also need to meet the work test?
- b. Will universities be required to verify payslips or bank statements? If so, how is it proposed this be undertaken?
- c. How will you prioritise applications for the funding? Will there be limits at the institution level or will they be processed in order of an institutions grant application and when the money runs out, it's out?

Answer

- a) No. Students who are in receipt of an income support payment will not be required to meet the need to work test.
- b) Administrative steps for the 'need to work' test will be finalised in collaboration with the Commonwealth Prac Payment (CPP) Operational Working Group. This will include verification of hours worked and income levels.
- c) CPP is a demand-driven program which means providers will receive sufficient funding based on eligible enrolments, including adjustments as required, to ensure all eligible students receive a payment.

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000057

Senator Sarah Henderson provided in writing.

Regulatory Impact Statement not required

Question

Please provide a copy of all documents, communications and advices concerning the reasons a Regulatory Impact Statement for the bill was not required.

Answer

The related documents, communications and advice from the Office of Impact Assessment were prepared for the purposes of Cabinet consideration. The deliberations of Cabinet and its Committee are confidential. It is a longstanding practice of successive governments not to disclose information about the operations and business of the Cabinet and its Committees, including information on New Policy Proposals that may have been proposed or considered.

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000058

Senator Sarah Henderson provided in writing.

Compliance Requirements for Student Unions, Associations and Guilds

Question

What compliance requirements will student unions, associations and guilds need to meet to ensure the money is being spent appropriately. Will this be undertaken by the Department or the university?

Answer

As part of the current SSAF acquittal responsibilities, providers need to continue to declare annually to the Department of Education that the SSAF revenue received by their institution has been spent in accordance with sections 19-38 of the *Higher Education Support Act (HESA) 2003*.

The department undertakes compliance checks based on the information that providers submit.

These reporting requirements and compliance checks will continue, and are consistent with arrangements in place under HESA since 2012.

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000059

Senator Sarah Henderson provided in writing.

Commonwealth Prac Payment - timeliness of processing grant applications

Question

How quickly will grant applications from providers be processed?

Answer

Providers will administer payments to students. Providers will not be required to lodge grant applications with the Commonwealth.

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000060

Senator Sarah Henderson provided in writing.

Spending Restrictions on Student Services and Amenities Fees

Question

There are restrictions on how SSAF money can be spent. Please outline these restrictions including the definition of “political purposes”.

Answer

Sections 19-38 (1), (2) and (3) of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* specifies restrictions on SSAF expenditure.

This includes that a higher education provider must not spend an amount paid to the provider as a student services and amenities fee to support (a) a political party; or (b) the election of a person as a member of (i) the legislature of the Commonwealth, a State or a Territory; or (ii) a local government body. The restriction applies whether a higher education provider pays directly or indirectly through a separate person or organisation.

This is consistent with arrangements that have been in place under HESA since 2012.

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000061

Senator Sarah Henderson provided in writing.

Regulatory Impact Statement for any proposal

Question

Was a regulatory impact statement completed for any proposal contained within the bill? If so, please provide this statement and any other related documents and please also explain why you did not make this clear in your answer to the committee?

Answer

Please refer to response to IQ24-000057.

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000062

Senator Sarah Henderson provided in writing.

Commonwealth Prac Payment - timing and requirements on how providers distribute the payment to students

Question

Will there be requirements on how providers distribute the payment to students, including the timing of payments?

Answer

The distribution and timing of payments made by providers will be finalised in consultation with the sector through the CPP Operational Working Group that includes tertiary education provider representatives.

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000063

Senator Sarah Henderson provided in writing.

Communications - HELP loan refunds

Question

Please provide all communications between the Minister for Education (minister), the Department of Education (DoE) and the Australian Taxation Office in relation to the estimated number of people with a HELP loan who would receive a monetary refund (as distinct from a credit to their HELP loan account) under the Government's proposed changes to HELP indexation.

Answer

To the Department of Education's (the department) knowledge there has been no communication between the Minister and the ATO that provided an estimate of the number of people who will receive a cash refund as a result of this measure.

The ATO advised the department on 21 August 2024 that it is unable to provide a precise estimate of the number of people who will receive refunds, or the size of these refunds, as it requires the ATO to first assess their entitlement according to their individual circumstances.

The ATO advised the department on 26 August 2024 that, as at July 2024, approximately 200,000 people have fully repaid their HELP debt since indexation was applied on 1 June 2023. Some of these people may receive a refund depending on their individual circumstances, including whether they have any outstanding tax or other Commonwealth debts.

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000064

Senator Sarah Henderson provided in writing.

Commonwealth Prac Payment - reconciliation process and compliance requirements for cancelled payments

Question

What happens, or what reconciliation processes will be in place, for a student who has their practical placement cancelled, or is unwell, or even drops out of their course. Will the amount need to be repaid and, if so, who will be responsible? What are the compliance requirements under such circumstances?

Answer

The Department of Education is working with the higher education sector to deliver this new payment.

This includes developing Program Guidelines, which will establish clear guidance and criteria for providers to support their administration of the program, including on the course of action providers can take with students who are not able to complete their practicum for a range of reasons.

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000065

Senator Sarah Henderson provided in writing.

Student Services and Amenities Fees - Funding Restriction

Question

Is there any restriction on SSAF monies being used to fund protest activity? Does the bill provide the Government with the power to withhold funding to a student organisation where students are the subject of misconduct allegations?

Answer

Sections 19-38 (1), (2) and (3) of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* specify restrictions on SSAF expenditure. Section 19-38 (4) specifies services that SSAF can be used to fund.

It is a matter for the higher education provider to consider the nature of the activity being undertaken and whether that meets the requirements as set out in Section 19-38.

Funding provided by universities to student organisations is not held by the Government so therefore cannot be withheld by the Government.

Universities must comply with section 19-38 of the HESA. If there is evidence a university has not complied then the Department of Education can take compliance action, including:

- imposing conditions of approval on a provider such as limits on courses that can be offered
- issuing a request for the provider to provide more information to the Department of Education
- requiring a provider to be independently audited at its own cost
- issuing a compliance notice which is a formal breach notice specifying the details of the non-compliance and remedies and suspending or revoking a provider's approval.

These options are not sequential. The action taken would depend on the severity of the non-compliance.

QUESTION ON NOTICE
Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000066

Senator Sarah Henderson provided in writing.

Tax on payments

Question

The payments will be taxable, but universities will not be withholding tax from the payments. How will students pay tax on their payments?

Answer

All students in receipt of the Commonwealth Prac Payment will be responsible for ensuring they comply with normal income tax obligations and declare this as income. Students will be informed the payment is taxable.

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000067

Senator Sarah Henderson provided in writing.

Commonwealth Prac Payment - 5 per cent administrative fee administered by universities

Question

How did you establish that a 5 per cent administrative fee was sufficient for universities to administer the payment? Did you consult with the sector to determine this amount and if so, with whom did you consult?

Answer

The administrative loading of 5 per cent was benchmarked against the financial support provided for delivery of other similar programs taking into account the scale of the Commonwealth Prac Payment program (up to 73,000 students).

Consultation was undertaken through a wide range of meetings with individual universities, groups of universities and other stakeholders, as well as with the Accord Implementation Advisory Committee (IAC) that provides expert advice on the implementation of the Australian Government response to the Australian Universities Accord.

Information on the IAC can be found at: <https://www.education.gov.au/australian-universities-accord/accord-202425-budget-measures/accord-implementation-advisory-committee>.

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions] QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000068

Senator Sarah Henderson provided in writing.

HELP indexation - payment timeframes

Question

Under the Government's retrospective changes to HELP indexation, when will a credit or refund, as applicable, be provided by the ATO and how will this payment be made? Please provide all relevant documents in relation to the timeframe for the processing of the refunds or credits. Are any systems upgrades required to process such payments and, if so, please describe the nature and cost of the upgrade? (In responding to this question, it is not acceptable to state that this data is held by the ATO as I am seeking this information as included in documents held by the minister or the DoE.)

Answer

Once legislation passes, the Australian Taxation Office (ATO) will automatically apply the indexation credits. HELP debtors whose HELP debt balance will be less than zero as a result of the reduction, and who do not have other primary tax or Commonwealth debts, will receive a refund via the usual ATO refund mechanisms, which is to their nominated financial institution account as recorded by the ATO.

As advised in the Department of Education's submission to the inquiry, the ATO has been preparing for this measure since it was announced in the 2024–25 Budget. If the legislation passes as proposed, the ATO will begin applying the new indexation amounts to individual records as soon as possible.

This work is a high priority for the ATO and it has made internal preparations to process the approximately 6 million transactions. The ATO has advised it plans to process the credits in batches.

The department is unable to advise how long this process will take or what processes the ATO will use; this is a matter for the ATO.

ATO departmental costs for the implementation of this measure, as advised by the ATO, were included in the Budget.

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000069

Senator Sarah Henderson provided in writing.

Payments that intersect with the Commonwealth Prac Payment

Question

In your answer to the committee, you stated that there were many other payments made to these students that could potentially intersect with the Commonwealth Prac Payment? Please provide a list of these payments and whether recipient students, in each such case, will be eligible for a Commonwealth Prac Payment?

Answer

The Department of Education is aware there are a range of initiatives across governments offering various supports to students.

The new Commonwealth Prac Payment (CPP) will help ease the cost-of-living pressures experienced by many students when undertaking mandatory practicum placements as part of their degrees, while state and territory initiatives vary in terms of their objectives and the support they provide.

This includes the following list of state and territory initiatives which have been compiled using information collected through:

- the Department of Health and Aged Care's multi-jurisdictional Health Workforce Taskforce in late 2023;
- the Department of Education's multi-jurisdictional National Teacher Workforce Action Plan Working Group in late 2023; and
- information gathered by the Department of Education from publicly available websites for social work in early 2024.

The information provided below is based on a point in time outlined above.

List of state and territory initiatives the Department of Education is aware of:

State or Territory	T/N/SW	Program Name
New South Wales	Teaching	Teacher Education Scholarship
	Teaching	Early Childhood Teaching Scholarships
	Teaching	Teach.Rural Scholarship
	Teaching	Teacher Education Scholarship - Aboriginal
	Teaching	Mid-Career Transition to Teaching Program
	Teaching	Grow Your Own – Teacher Training Program
	Teaching	Graduate Teacher Scholarship

	Teaching	Riverina Teaching Hub Program - Initial Teacher Education Pathway
	Nursing and Midwifery	NSW Aboriginal Nursing and Midwifery Cadetship
	Nursing and Midwifery	NSW Health and Aboriginal Nursing and Midwifery Undergraduate Scholarships
	Nursing, Midwifery and Social Work (Allied Health)	Tertiary Health Study Subsidies
	Social Work (Allied Health)	Aboriginal Allied Health Cadetship program
	Social Work (Allied Health)	Aboriginal Rural Allied Health University Student Scholarship
	Social Work (Allied Health)	NSW Rural Allied Health Undergraduate Scholarship
Victoria	Teaching	Scholarships for secondary teaching degrees
	Teaching	Pre-service teaching Placement Grant Program
	Teaching	Teach Tomorrow Program
	Teaching	Teach Rural pilot program (placement grant)
	Nursing Midwifery	<i>Making It Free to Study Nursing and Midwifery</i> Undergrad (entry-to-practice) nursing and midwifery scholarships
Queensland	Teaching	Turn to Teaching Internship Program
	Teaching	Pearl Duncan Teaching Scholarship
	Teaching	Supported Pathway into Teaching for Teacher Aides
Western Australia	Nursing and Midwifery	Chief Nursing and Midwifery Office Initial Registration Scholarships
South Australia	Teaching	Country Professional experience scholarships
	Teaching	Amy Levai Aboriginal Teaching Scholarships
Tasmania	Teaching	Teacher Intern Placement Program
	Nursing	Study Leave for Clinical Placements
	Nursing/Midwifery	Tasmanian Nursing and Midwifery Scholarships
	Nursing/Midwifery/Allied Health	Ida West Aboriginal Health Scholarship
Australian Capital Territory	Teaching	Paid Practicum Leave (salary)
Northern Territory	Teaching	Aboriginal Teacher Education Scholarship

The Commonwealth Prac Payment (CPP) is intended to complement these initiatives, rather than replace them. Further guidance regarding eligibility will be published in due course, as part of preparations for the 1 July 2025 commencement of payments.

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000070

Senator Sarah Henderson provided in writing.

Consultation and Advice on Implications

Question

Your submission also notes there is no cost implication for this measure. Whilst this may be true for the Commonwealth, there are cost implications for providers and ultimately students who may see degradation of the essential services provided like mental health support and food banks etc. Did you consult with the sector or receive any advice on those implications?

Answer

Please refer to IQ24-000045 for consultation with the sector.

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

**Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]
QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000071

Senator Sarah Henderson provided in writing.

Commonwealth Prac Payment - Privacy Impact Assessment

Question

Was there a Privacy Impact Assessment undertaken for this payment and the proposed administration?

- a. Did you consider privacy implications for the student in providing this level of personal information to their providers?
- b. Did you get advice from the Australian Government Solicitor? If so, please provide a copy of this?

Answer

Higher education component

- a. Yes, the Department of Education considered implications for students in providing this level of personal information to their provider, noting universities already collect and hold a range of personal and sensitive information about students.
- b. The Department of Education did not seek advice from Australian Government Solicitor. Division 179 (Protection of Personal Information) of the *Higher Education Support Act (HESA) 2003* is clear about higher education provider obligations and procedures relating to the protection of personal information.

VET component

- a. A PIA relating to VET students is a matter for the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations.

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000072

Senator Sarah Henderson provided in writing.

Payments to providers - taxation

Question

Will payments to providers be deemed as assessable income for taxation tax purposes?

Answer

Commonwealth Prac Payment funding paid to providers will be treated by those providers in accordance with their existing arrangements for funding they receive under the *Higher Education Support Act (2003)*.

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000073

Senator Sarah Henderson provided in writing.

Fee Changes for Students Studying Enabling Courses

Question

Students studying enabling courses currently pay the SSAF, will this requirement continue given they are now to be known as FEE-FREE?

Answer

There is no requirement on providers to charge a Student Services and Amenities Fee (SSAF); it is at a provider's discretion. This includes whether to charge the SSAF to students enrolled in a FEE-FREE Uni Ready course.

This is consistent with arrangements in place under HESA since 2012.

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000074

Senator Sarah Henderson provided in writing.

FEE-FREE Uni Ready Courses Guidelines

Question

When will you release the guidelines for the FEE-FREE Uni Ready courses? Please provide the draft guidelines and any working documents in relation to the proposed guidelines.

Answer

The updated Commonwealth Grant Scheme Guidelines 2020 and Higher Education Support (Other Grants) Guidelines 2022 for FEE-FREE Uni Ready are currently under development.

The release of the Guidelines is a matter for Government.

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000075

Senator Sarah Henderson provided in writing.

Payments to providers - state and territory payroll tax

Question

Will payments to providers, particularly private providers, be assessable under state and territory government payroll tax laws?

Answer

Commonwealth Prac Payment funding paid to providers will be treated by those providers in accordance with their existing taxation arrangements for funding they receive under the *Higher Education Support Act (2003)*.

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000076

Senator Sarah Henderson provided in writing.

FEE-FREE Uni Ready Courses - Allocations

Question

What are the course allocations for each provider for 2025, 2026 and 2027?

- a. When will providers be notified of their allocations?
- b. You have foreshadowed that places will grow to 30,000 over the next few years, when will that trajectory be known and when will providers be advised of their allocations?

Answer

Providers will be informed of their 2025 FEE-FREE Uni Ready (FFUR) funding allocations ahead of the 2025 calendar year.

It is intended that future year FFUR funding allocations will be determined in the context of wider funding reforms by the Australian Tertiary Education Commission, once established.

The actual number of students enrolling in FFUR courses in future years cannot be determined until the Department of Education receives verified enrolment data for those periods.

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000077

Senator Sarah Henderson provided in writing.

Payments to students - accounting software risks

Question

For providers to make the payments, students will likely be added to a provider's accounting and business software. Is there a risk that a student could be deemed to be an employee for accounting or other purposes and what steps has the Commonwealth taken to alleviate that risk?

Answer

As the Commonwealth Prac Payment is not payment for work nor employment students should not be categorised or entered on a provider's accounting or business software as an employee.

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

**Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]
QUESTION ON NOTICE**

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000078

Senator Sarah Henderson provided in writing.

Enabling Courses Offered to Students

Question

Please provide a list of enabling courses offered to students by each provider?

Answer

Table A universities are self-accrediting institutions able to design and approve their own courses. The Department of Education does not keep a list of enabling courses offered by these institutions.

The National Association of Enabling Educators of Australia published a list of enabling programs offered by Australian higher education institutions as at November 2023 on its website at <https://enablingeducators.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/04/Enabling-Programs-offered-within-Australian-Higher-Education-Institutions-2023.docx>.

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000079

Senator Sarah Henderson provided in writing.

Payments to students - superannuation

Question

Are students entitled to superannuation in relation to this payment?

Answer

No.

The Commonwealth Prac Payment is an education support payment. It is not paid employment.

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000080

Senator Sarah Henderson provided in writing.

Refund requirements

Question

For people who may be eligible for a cash refund, is it correct that such a refund will be only be paid in full where there is no other liability to the Commonwealth such as a Centrelink, child support or ATO debt? For people are entitled to a refund, what is the net amount that will be payable less debts owed to the Commonwealth? (In responding to this question, it is not acceptable to state that this data is held by the ATO as I am seeking this information as included in documents held by the minister or the DoE.)

Answer

Refunds flowing from the HELP indexation measure will be managed by the ATO in the same way as any other tax refund.

In some circumstances, debts from income support payments, Child Support or other Commonwealth liabilities, may result in a reduction in the refund payment.

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000081

Senator Sarah Henderson provided in writing.

Arrangements with the ATO

Question

Has the DoE entered into an agreement or arrangement with the ATO in relation to the Government's proposed changes to HELP indexation? If so, please provide a copy of the documents detailing this agreement or arrangement.

Answer

The Australian Taxation Office (ATO) manages the Income Contingent Loan program through Memoranda of Understanding with relevant policy agencies, including the Department of Education (the department).

The changes proposed by the Bill to HELP indexation do not alter the existing arrangements that exist between the ATO and the department in relation to the processing and repayment of HELP debts.

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000082

Senator Sarah Henderson provided in writing.

Refund and credit communications

Question

How and when will the DoE or the Government communicate with individuals to the receipt of a credit or refund? Please provide a copy of all documents held by the DoE or the minister in relation to this matter. Is there any advertising or other promotional campaign planned in relation this communication and, if so, please provide details of such materials including drafts of media releases, scripts, or other advertising or promotional materials.

Answer

The timing and release of Government communications about this measure are a matter for Government.

The Department of Education has been providing regular information on this measure through the department's website and other communications channels, see: <https://www.education.gov.au/helpcalculator/faqs-help-indexation-credit> and is planning general communication through these usual channels following the passage of legislation, including information on how people can view their indexation credits once applied.

All HELP debtors will be able to check their HELP debt via myGov in order to see any credits that have been applied.

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions]

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000083

Senator Sarah Henderson provided in writing.

Australian Government Actuary's financial assessment

Question

Please provide a copy of the Australian Government Actuary's financial assessment undertaken for the proposed changes to HELP indexation.

Answer

The requested assessment relates to the deliberation of Cabinet and its Committees which is confidential. It is a longstanding practice of successive Governments not to disclose information about the operations and business of the Cabinet and its Committees, including on New Policy Proposals that may have been proposed or considered.

Senate Standing Committees on Education and Employment

Universities Accord (Student Support and Other Measures) Bill 2024 [Provisions] QUESTION ON NOTICE

Date of hearing: 24 September 2024

Outcome: Higher Education, Research and International

Department of Education Question No. IQ24-000084

Senator Sarah Henderson provided in writing.

Payment breakdown

Question

The Government has announced that an estimated 73,000 people may be eligible for the payment. How have you calculated this estimate? Please provide a breakdown by the three chosen areas of study?

Answer

The Commonwealth Prac Payment (CPP) is estimated to be available to 73,000 students which is based on an estimated 68,000 higher education students and an estimated 5,000 VET students per year.

The estimate is based on 2022 verified student enrolment data from Tertiary Collection of Student Information (TCSI). The final numbers of students are likely to vary as it is not possible to predict changes in enrolments and take-up of CPP which are driven by student choice.

The breakdown, by discipline, is as follows:

Discipline	Higher education students per year (approx.)
Nursing	24,000
Midwifery	2,000
Teacher Education	35,000
Social Work	7,000
TOTAL	68 000

For the Diploma of Nursing qualification, over 5,000 VET students will access the CPP per year, based on figures from National Centre for Vocational Education Research – NCVET 2023 – Total Vet students and courses 2022.