

Senate Community Affairs Legislation Committee

BUDGET ESTIMATES - 4 JUNE 2013 ANSWER TO QUESTION ON NOTICE

Human Services Portfolio

Topic: Education Expenses

Question reference number: HS 69

Senator: Smith

Type of question: Written

Date set by the committee for the return of answer: 26 July 2013

Number of pages: 2

Question:

- a) What is the department/agency's guidelines on study?
- b) For this financial year to date, detail all education expenses (i.e. in house courses and tertiary studies) for each portfolio department and agency. Include what type of course, the total cost, cost per participant, the employment classification of each participant, how many participants and the amount of study leave granted to each participant (provide a breakdown for each employment classification). Also include the reason for the study and how it is beneficial for the department/agency.

Answer:

- a) Clause H15 of the Department of Human Services Agreement 2011 – 2014 outlines the entitlements and provisions for access to studies assistance for employees. In determining the provision of studies assistance, consideration is given to the development needs of the employee, the resources, operational needs and corporate goals of the Department, the effective work performance of the approved student, the length of the course and the demonstrated requirements of the broader APS. All employees may receive studies assistance for full time or part time studies in the form of paid leave, unpaid leave, and/or full or partial reimbursement of costs associated with studies.
- b) The Department of Human Services education expense for the financial year to date (i.e. 1 July 2012 to 31 March 2013) is \$7,686,772. This amount includes technical and skills based training for the Department of approximately 36,000 employees. It also includes educational expenses linked to accredited learning and formal study leave. The range of courses offered includes:
 - leadership and change programs;
 - customer service (including customer aggression training and mental health first aid training); and
 - professional development for specialist roles.

For the financial year to date (i.e. 1 July 2012 to 31 March 2013), 1,624 courses were conducted across the Department with a combined course attendance totalling 221,792. Course participation identifies the total number of attendees across all course delivery methods and can include web based learning, self-paced learning, facilitated and formal classroom training. An employee may have attended more than one course.

The information required to answer the question of cost per participant and employment classification per participant is not readily available. To prepare an answer would require an unreasonable diversion of resources

A total of 660 employees used study leave. Study leave can include leave with full pay, leave without pay (LWOP), including leave to count as service and leave not to count as service. The amount of study leave granted to a participant can vary and on average it is 10.5 days per approved employee. Total time taken by staff accessing study leave combined equals 6,933 days.

The following table provides a breakdown of how many employees at each level accessed study leave for the financial year to date (i.e. 1 July 2012 to 31 March 2013).

Employee Classification Level	Number of employees using study leave
APS Trainee/Graduate	33
APS1	3
APS2	3
APS3	49
APS4	187
APS5	103
APS6	179
EL1	84
EL2	19
Total employees using study leave	660

Study is beneficial for the department and undertaken for the purpose of equipping staff with the qualifications, knowledge and skills to perform a variety of service delivery, health, social welfare and support roles.