

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry Portfolio
Budget Estimates Hearing 2014-15
2-3 June 2014

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: Australian Skills Quality Authority

TOPIC: Student Enrolment Incentives

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 2 June 2014, page 56)

QUESTION No.: BI-27

Senator KIM CARR: Is it common practice to enrol students on the basis of incentives such as the provision of iPads or laptops or \$1,000 shopping vouchers rather than on the basis of academic record?

Prof. Lavarch: I do not know whether we have complete analysis as to the percentage of that that we think might be occurring in the marketplace as a whole. I could take that aspect of the question on notice. I do not think it is standard practice by any means. But, in a free market, providers are entitled to seek to get customers into their business, and there is not necessarily any correlation between a particular marketing practice and the quality of the training and learning outcome that might be achieved, which is obviously the main focus of ASQA's operation.

ANSWER

ASQA does not collect data relating to whether or not incentives were offered as part of a student enrolment.

ASQA Regulated RTOs must at all times comply with the *Standards for NVR Registered Training Organisations 2012* (the Standards), which require that providers demonstrate that their "...marketing and advertising of AQF and VET qualifications to prospective clients is ethical, accurate and consistent with its scope of registration" (SNR 13/24). Further, providers must also adhere to *Australian Consumer Law (ACL)* requirements detailed in the *Competition and Consumer Act 2010*.

The offering of incentives to students to enrol in a course is not prohibited under the Standards or the ACL.

ASQA can take action if it believes a provider is misleading in its advertising or acting unethically in its marketing practices. There are also general and specific provisions within the ACL relating to misleading conduct and/or representations that an individual could pursue.