

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

**QUESTION ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2014 - 2015**

Outcome: Higher Education Research and International

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ15-000163

Senator Carr, Kim provided in writing

VET FEE HELP - unscrupulous providers

Question

Is the Department aware of or have they compiled a database of unscrupulous providers or providers who are of concern to the Department in their utilisation of VET FEE-Help?

- a. Who is on this list?
- b. Has there been an investigation or action taken against these providers?
- c. How many students are affected? Have students been notified?
- d. Has the Department been aware of problems in Victoria with Vocation? How long was the Department aware that there were problems with Vocation?
- e. Have these matters had implications for VET FEE-Help? Is there a pattern of behaviour amongst providers of concern?
- f. What action has the Department taken in order to tackle patterns of behaviour of high-risk providers?

Answer

All complaints and allegations of poor behaviour or poor quality training are taken seriously and acted upon. A dedicated VET FEE-HELP compliance strategy was established, for the first time, in 2014. The Department does not have such a database.

- a. See above.
- b. See above. The Department of Education and Training is implementing a number of changes to the scheme. Details of these measures are available at <http://studyassist.gov.au/sites/StudyAssist/HELPpayingMyFees/VET-FEE-HELP/Documents/VET%20FEE%20HELP%20Reforms%20Factsheet-%20Implementation%20Overview.PDF>. These measures seek to address administrative arrangements in place since 2012 which have been exploited by a minority of unscrupulous providers/brokers. Complaints about this behaviour were first received by the regulator, the Australian Skills Quality Authority, in early 2013.

The Government has also announced the national regulator, the Australian Skills Quality Authority, is conducting 23 targeted audits of RTOs to address allegations of unscrupulous marketing and other practices intended to exploit the VET FEE-HELP scheme.

The crack down on unacceptable activities is being supported by an enhanced compliance regime, with \$18.2 million budgeted to support activities, including more random audits on both students and training providers. This funding is in addition to the \$68 million provided to ASQA for improved compliance and quality outcomes.

- c. It is not possible to specify the number of students affected

- d. Yes. The department and the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) are aware of Vocation Limited. Refer to SQ15-000096.
- e. Vocation owns one approved VET FEE-HELP provider, Training and Development Australia Pty Ltd.
- f. See (b) above.