

Economics Legislation Committee
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Industry, Innovation, Science, Research and Tertiary Education Portfolio
Additional Estimates Hearing 2012-13
13 February 2013

AGENCY/DEPARTMENT: DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, INNOVATION, SCIENCE, RESEARCH AND TERTIARY EDUCATION

TOPIC: Average length of study and time funded by scholarships

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 13 February 2013, pages 64-65)

QUESTION No.: AI-29

Senator RHIANNON: Thank you. What is currently the average length of time taken to complete PhDs or other postgraduate degrees in different areas of study?

Ms Baly: I think it is about 4½ years for a PhD, but we can take that on notice and confirm it.

Senator RHIANNON: Would you also have data on how much of that time is funded by scholarships?

Ms Baly: We can tell you, in the funding that we provide to universities, how long that lasts for. A student who is on an Australian Postgraduate Award, an APA—which is the stipend part of that—is able to get 3½ years worth of scholarship, and the Research Training Scheme that funds the university—so that is like the tuition part of that—goes for four years.

Senator RHIANNON: If I understand correctly, on average it takes about 4½ years to complete the higher education degree, and about 3½ years, on average, is funded. Is there any data on how much time postgraduate research students therefore spend in paid employment and how it impacts on their research and thesis completion?

Ms Baly: I do not know whether we have that information, but I can take that on notice and see what we can get for you.

ANSWER

According to the Higher Education Information Management System (HEIMS) data collection, higher degree by research students such as Doctorate by research and Masters by research, in 2011, on average, completed their degrees in 4.5 years.

The department holds no data on how much time is spent in paid employment by postgraduate research students.

Universities can impose conditions on postgraduate research students to ensure that paid employment does not compromise satisfactory progress in their courses.