

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: Pre-bachelor & post-graduate placements

REFERENCE: Written Question – Senator Bushby

QUESTION No.: AI-87

What factors/criteria determine a University's allocation of pre-bachelor and post-graduate placements?

ANSWER

Sub-bachelor places

A university's allocation of sub-bachelor places is based on:

- its estimated load in 2011, agreed in late 2011;
- the number of additional places allocated for 2012; and
- any variations agreed in the context of negotiating the 2013 funding agreements.

In 2011 following the Minister's decision to designate sub-bachelor places, Higher Education Division (then located in the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations) assessed universities' requests for additional places for 2012 on the following criteria:

- that courses would not displace existing courses provided in the Vocational Education and Training (VET) sector;
- that courses would not result in cost shifting from VET to the higher education sector (i.e. from the states/territories to the Commonwealth);
- the university was not looking to establish a new physical presence in a region that was already adequately serviced by other providers, unless it was related to the provision of a particular in demand course which could not be met in the VET sector;
- the needs of people from low socio economic status backgrounds and groups under-represented in higher education which could not be met in the VET sector; and
- whether the request for new places related to a tertiary education infrastructure project approved by the Government.

In 2012, requests for new sub-bachelor places for 2013 were considered on the basis of the Government's equity agenda to improve the participation of people from low socio economic status and disadvantaged backgrounds.

Postgraduate places

A university's allocation of postgraduate places is based on:

- ‘historical’ allocations (pre-2005 HECS liable postgraduate load);
- allocations of new commencing postgraduate allocations since 2005;
- approvals for cost neutral transfers of student places from undergraduate to postgraduate courses (an arrangement that existed prior to the introduction of demand driven higher education funding); and
- the estimated number of ‘over-enrolment postgraduate places the university was providing in April 2011. This relates to the arrangements in place in 2010 and 2011 that supported universities transition to the new demand driven funding system. Universities were able to over-enrol and receive additional funding of up to 10% over the funding they would have generally received for the total number undergraduate and postgraduate Commonwealth supported places they were allocated.

As part of the negotiations with universities on their postgraduate places funding, the following criterion is used to determine any requests for new places or to reallocate places:

1. that the course is, or is moving to, being an accepted' entry-level for a profession; or
2. meets an identifies need in an area of skill shortage; or
3. is of national significance (i.e health or education related).