

Senate Standing Committee on Economics
ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
Innovation, Industry, Science and Research Portfolio
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2011-2012
19 October 2011

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

TOPIC: UNIVERSITY FUNDING

REFERENCE: Question on Notice (Hansard, 19 October 2011, page 33)

QUESTION No.: SI-23

Senator MASON: Minister, your department may take this on notice. Universities often complain to me about the doubling up of their administrative costs in complying with government regulations. Would you be able to give me a list of all the instances where the department—that is, DIISR—requires universities to provide information or data to the department to qualify for funding, to comply with any law or regulation or any other reason, together with the information or data the university has to provide? Is that possible?

Senator CARR: I understand that is possible. Can I make this point: this portfolio prides itself on its engagement. We make a real effort to talk to people. It might sound strange but I think it is a fundamental to good public administration. That invariably will involve costs associated with meetings and various forms of communication, but we do not rely on a formula driven program delivery model. We make a real effort to communicate with the people we are dealing with.

ANSWER

The Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research (DIISR) collects information on the research activity of universities through the Higher Education Research Data Collection (HERDC). The HERDC is used to assess the relative research and research training performance of higher education providers, and to calculate the allocation of research block grants.

In order to access funding available through Research Block Grants (RBGs) universities are required to provide research income and research publications data for the previous calendar year to DIISR by 30 June each year.

The HERDC specifications control the collection of HERDC data and are designed to ensure the RBG are allocated in a fair and transparent way and to support the policy intent of the funding. The specifications are available here:

<http://www.innovation.gov.au/Research/ResearchBlockGrants/Pages/HigherEducationResearchDataCollection.aspx>

Data used in RBG funding formulae is available here:

<http://www.innovation.gov.au/Research/ResearchBlockGrants/Pages/RBGFundingFormulaeData.aspx>

DIISR provides funding to the Australian National University (ANU) for their Commonwealth-ANU strategic relationship under five funding agreements for:

- the Australian National Institute for Public Policy (ANIPP, including the HC Coombs Policy Forum, the Sir Roland Wilson Foundation Scholarships, enhancement of the Crawford School of Economics and Government, enhancement of the Canberra presence of the Australia-New Zealand School of Government (ANZSOG) and a feasibility study for student accommodation at ANU);
- the National Security College (NSC);
- the Australian Centre on China in the World (CIW);
- a new building to house the NSC and the enhanced presence of ANZSOG; and
- a new signature building for CIW.

The ANU is required to provide a range of documents and reports to DIISR under each of these funding agreements, including strategic, business and financial plans, revenue estimates, annual reports and various approval documents for the building works.

AUSTRALIAN CENTRE FOR CHILD PROTECTION

DIISR provides funding to the University of South Australia for the operation of the Australian Centre for Child Protection (ACCP). The ACCP is required to provide an annual report, including an audited financial report, to comply with the Conditions of Grant for its funding under the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* - Higher Education Research Promotion (HERP).

INSTITUTIONAL PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO (IPP)

DIISR collects information and data annually from universities through the Institutional Performance Portfolio Information Collection (IPPIC) coordinated by the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations.

DIISR requests the following information:

1. *Research*: Data on research performance including publications performance and research income.
2. *Research Training*: Data on research training performance including higher degree by research enrolments and completions.
3. *Innovation*: Data on innovation performance, including collaborations with industry partners, R&D and commercialisation activities or management practices.

Universities were invited to participate in the *Examination of the Full Cost of Research Training* exercise, conducted in early 2011, which was a pilot study to ascertain the cost of research training in universities. Those that agreed to be part of the study were asked to provide financial data in-confidence. Universities voluntarily provided their data which fed into the final report now available on DIISR's website.