

## EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

### SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2003-2004 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING

**Outcome:** 2

**Output Group:** 2.4 – Funding for higher education

#### **DEST Question No. E788\_04**

Senator Carr asked on 20 February 2004, EWRE Hansard page 3.

#### **Question:**

- a) Can I get an indication as to how it (the graduate test [GRE] in the U.S.) compares (to the GSA)?
- b) To what extent would the graduate skills assessment have to be modified to be used as a graduate entry test similar to the one used in the United States?
- c) Are you considering extending it (the GSA) with modifications?

#### **Answer:**

- a) *GSA – GSA Comparison*

The GRE General Test and the GSA differ in key respects including their purpose and the nature of the assessment. The GRE is an entry test used by universities as part of their graduate admissions process. It is used as one component of a student's application for post graduate study.

The GSA provides information on graduate outcomes, which may be used by universities, graduates and their parents, and employers. It was not originally designed for use as an entry test in an admissions process. Since it is offered as a tool to measure skills on entry and exit from an undergraduate degree, it could be used as an indicator of the value added through the university experience.

#### GRE

The skills assessed in the GRE general test are verbal, quantitative, analytic and writing, through argument and issue writing tasks.

Test time: 4 hours and 15 mins

Writing	1 Issue Task (present your perspective)	45 mins
	1 analysis of Argument Task	30 mins
Verbal	72 multiple choice questions	60 mins
Quantitative	60 multiple choice questions	60 mins
Analytical	50 multiple choice questions	60 mins

## GSA

The skills assessed in the GSA are critical thinking, problem solving, interpersonal understandings and written communication through argument and report writing tasks.

Test time: 3 hours

Written Communication	1 Argument Task	60 mins in total
	1 Report Task	
Critical Thinking	26 multiple choice questions	120 mins in total for the three multiple choice sections.
Problem Solving	26 multiple choice questions	
Interpersonal Understanding	26 multiple choice questions	

The focus of the writing tasks are different. The GSA requires students to write a report on information that has been provided and generate an argument rather than analyse a given argument. The verbal and quantitative skills components of the GRE are linked closely to specific skills covered in a curriculum, such as mathematical operations and vocabulary. In the GSA, the focus is on the broader, higher order skills of critical thinking, problem solving and interpersonal understandings. The GRE analytic reasoning is more like the GSA, though it tends to avoid real contexts.

b) *Extent that graduate skills assessment would have to be modified to be used as a graduate entry test similar to the one used in the United States*

There is no intention at this point to modify the GSA so that it can be used as a graduate entry test, similar to the GRE in the United States of America. Therefore there has been no exploration of this as a possibility.

c) *Extending GSA with modifications*

At this stage the future direction for the GSA is still under consideration. Some \$270,000 per year was allocated in *Our Universities: Backing Australia's Future* to promote the GSA from 2005. This provides an opportunity to scope the possibilities for the future uses of the GSA and to fully assess the direction in which the GSA should be taken, including the best ways to engage with employers, universities and students. Any decisions on extending the uses of the GSA are pending a careful analysis of the GSA's current and possible future directions.