

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2004-2005 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome: 1

Output Group: 1.2 – Assistance to individuals including those with special needs

DEST Question No. E830_05

Senator Carr provided in writing.

Refers to DEST Question Nos. E002_05, E305_05, E306_05 and E307_05

Question:

Please confirm that, under the Tutorial Credit Initiative program:

- (a) A person other than a qualified teacher, including a teacher education student part-way through their training, can provide tutorial services;
- (b) That (subject to the requirements of police checks) the only person absolutely precluded from providing tutorial services with respect to an individual child is that child's classroom teacher;
- (c) That the guidelines do not preclude a child's parent or other immediate family member from providing the tutorial assistance;
- (d) Organisations and companies that normally do not provide educational services to primary-school aged children (such as adult education providers or other commercial entities) can act as brokers for provision of services;
- (e) No standard benchmark or testing will be applied to assess the outcome of the tutorial program in the case of each individual child, but can vary from student to student at the discretion of the tutor and as agreed by parents;
- (f) It will be possible for providers and/or tutors to formulate a test to be applied to a child or children, and then simply to teach to ensure success with the exact requirements of the test as formulated;
- (g) That this would in theory allow tutors to teach students, for example, to remember the answers to a test, or a reading performance, by rote;
- (h) That no measures are included in the program guidelines to prevent rote learning and/or performance;
- (i) That the number of hours of assistance available to individual children will depend on the market hourly rate for tutors in the location where the student lives, and not on the educational needs of the student.

Can DEST confirm that, while the ATAS tutorial rate is \$35 an hour, in cities such as Sydney or Melbourne a much more accepted market rate for coaching or tutorial services is closer to \$100 an hour? Has DEST investigated the variations in the going rate for tutorial assistance or coaching in various locations or regions? What is the median rate?

On what assumptions about rates of pay has DEST costed the program? How many hours of tuition does the department estimate that each student will receive within the \$700 limit? How many hours of tuition does the department estimate the average child would require to enable him/her to reach the benchmark?

Does the department accept that, where the cost of tuition is higher, students will receive less tuition than where costs are lower? How will DEST ensure that students in high tuition-cost regions have outcomes equitable with those in regions where costs are lower?

Answer:

Tutorial Voucher Initiative

(a) The Broker/Tutor Guidelines for the pilot Tutorial Voucher Initiative state that “Prospective tutors must demonstrate relevant formal academic tertiary qualifications in education, such as a Diploma or Bachelor of Education, or partial completion of teaching qualifications that are recognised in Australia. (In these instances Tutors, at a minimum, must currently be enrolled in a teacher training course and successfully completed at least half of the course including successfully completing all thus far scheduled practicums associated with the course)”.

The Broker/Tutor Guidelines go on to state that “In some circumstances, other qualified specialist service providers who are experienced in supporting children in their reading development, teachers’ aides or unqualified persons with extensive teaching experience may be acceptable.” These persons must demonstrate that they have skills in teaching children to read (see section 4.4 of the Broker/Tutor Guidelines) and have a letter of support from their current employer or education institution.

(b) No, under section 4.2 of the Broker/Tutor Guidelines, members of the student’s family are also precluded from providing tuition.

(c) Section 4.2 of the Broker/Tutor Guidelines precludes members of the student’s family from providing the tutorial assistance.

(d) There were no restrictions on the organisations which were able to tender for the role of broker, however the tenders were assessed against the organisation’s ability to deliver tuition services to the target group.

(e) DEST has provided pre and post assessment material to brokers, which was developed for the pilot by the Australian Council for Educational Research (ACER). However tutors are able to use alternative assessment material if the broker agrees with this approach. This would be particularly relevant for tutors dealing with students with special needs who may have been exempted from the State or Territory’s standardised testing.

(f) It would be possible, however this would be against the spirit of the pilot. Each Student’s Work Programme will be monitored by the broker, and widespread rote teaching would be likely to be picked up through monitoring visits or by the external evaluation team.

(g) Refer to (f) above.

(h) We confirm, as noted above, that each Student’s Work Programme will be monitored by the broker, and widespread rote teaching would be likely to be picked up through monitoring visits or by the external evaluation team.

(i) Under the pilot, each eligible student will receive \$700 worth of tuition. The number of hours tuition that this equates to will depend on the approach taken by the broker. A number of brokers have established a set payment to tutors and therefore a standard number of hours for each child across the whole State or Territory.

The 2004 ATAS programme and the 2005-2008 ITAS programme do not generally prescribe the tutor rates that must be paid by education providers. In relation to the in-class tuition programme, which is delivered by school systems and schools, DEST uses tutor rates of \$30 per hour for individual tuition and \$35 per hour for small group tuition. As outlined in the 2005-2008 ITAS in-class tuition provider guidelines, the formulae are used only for the purposes of distributing available funding to providers and within the total funding available, providers may pay engaged tutors at an agreed rate.

In relation to ITAS for Year 10, 11 and 12 Indigenous school students, DEST may request a coaching college to deliver tuition to identified students. The coaching college hourly tutor rates are negotiated according to the tutors’ qualifications and the students’ learning needs.

DEST has not investigated the going rate for tutorial services across Australia. DEST costed the pilot on the basis of a set dollar amount per eligible student, with the number of hours to

be determined by the market rate for tutors. The Department estimates that each child will receive between 10 and 15 hours of tuition within the \$700 limit and that this will assist students to improve their reading.

DEST recognises that there could be higher costs for tutors associated with travel and accommodation in non-metropolitan areas and the programme provides funding to reimburse tutors for these costs.

The Initiative is a pilot which will be independently evaluated. As a pilot which is being implemented by a mix of public and private sector brokers across each State and Territory, the Department is aware that the approaches and outcomes may vary throughout the different regions of Australia. These differences will be examined by the independent evaluation.