

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE 2005-2006 ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES HEARING

Outcome 3
Output Group: 3.3 – Support for the Australian education and training export industry and international relationships.

DEST Question No. E988_06

Senator Wong provided in writing.

Question:

(With regard to student protection provisions of the Education Services for Overseas Students [ESOS] Act 2000)

Does DEST monitor the commercial viability of Tuition Assurance Schemes for international students studying in Australia?

Are there any Tuition Assurance Schemes who would be unable to fulfil their obligations in the event of the collapse of multiple providers in the scheme?

What action does DEST take to ensure the viability of Tuition Assurance Schemes?

Answer:

Tuition Assurance Schemes (TASs) under the ESOS Act 2000 and ESOS Regulations 2001

In accordance with the ESOS Regulations 2001, the Department assesses the viability of a TAS prior to granting approval for the commencement of a TAS. At any time, it may ask the operator of a TAS to provide any further information relevant to assessing whether the TAS continues to comply with relevant ESOS Regulations. The main indicator of the viability of a TAS is its performance in placing students in suitable alternative courses when required to do so. This is strictly monitored by DEST.

The Department has no information which would indicate that any currently approved TAS would be unable to fulfil its obligation in the event of the collapse of multiple provider members.

The ESOS Regulations require each TAS operator to report annually to the Department on the operations of its scheme. The Department works closely with each TAS operator to ensure it fulfils its requirements to place students in the event that this action is required. Effective placement of students relies much more on the rapid response of the TAS and role of its members in assisting affected students than on financial reserves.