

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

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

Outcome: 2

Output Group: 2.4 – Funding for higher education

DEST Question No. E191_05

Senator Stott Despoja provided in writing.

Question:

Please provide the most up to date estimates of the average teaching cost per year for each of the 12 discipline clusters listed in the Higher Education Support Act 2003. Please also provide estimates of student contributions as a percentage of the teaching costs and as a percentage of total university revenue for each university

Answer:

Cost of teaching courses under HESA

Currently the Commonwealth provides universities with a block operating grant. As universities are independent institutions how the universities choose to distribute this funding is a matter for each university's governing body. As such the Department is unable to provide average teaching costs per year for each of the 12 discipline clusters.

It is important to note that although the Commonwealth course contribution and the HECS component do relate to relativities across disciplines, it is not claimed that they are a measure of the costs. There is too much variability across course provision, and individual institutional use of research and other funds, for this to be possible. The funding for each cluster reflects the present provision of higher education funding but ensures greater transparency for both students and institutions.

DEST estimates of student contributions take into account the various subsidies inherent in the HECS-HELP programme. All of these subsidies, excluding the discount for up-front payments, are accounted for at the aggregate level. Consequently it is not possible to provide the student contribution at an institutional level.