

EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

**SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
2005-2006 BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING**

Outcome: 2

Output Group: 2.4 – Funding for Higher Education

DEST Question No. E306_06

Senator Carr requested on 2 June 2005, EWRE Hansard page 75.

Question:

Would you provide a copy of the letter to Vice-Chancellors from the Department informing of the Higher Education Workplace Relations Requirements?

Answer:

Higher Education Workplace Relations Requirements

The Department informed Vice-Chancellors in writing on 29 April 2005 of the Higher Education Workplace Relations Requirements. A copy of this letter is attached.



Australian Government
Department of Education, Science and Training

Vice Chancellor

Dear Vice Chancellor

I am writing to inform you of new arrangements the Australian Government has put in place to provide flexibility and choice to higher education providers with regard to their workplace policies.

As you are aware the Australian Government announced on 29 April 2005 the new Higher Education Workplace Relations Requirements (HEWRRs) to assist universities to become more productive, efficient, flexible and internationally competitive. The requirements were released jointly by the Minister for Education, Science and Training, Dr Nelson, and the Minister for Employment and Workplace Relations, Mr Andrews. The requirements encourage a commitment to workplace reform and reflect the Government's focus on providing staff with genuine choice in agreement-making, direct relationships with employees, workplace flexibility, workplace productivity and performance, and freedom of association. Details of the HEWRRs and a policy document setting out the administrative arrangements are attached.

Universities will need to meet the HEWRRs as well as the National Governance Protocols in order to be eligible for the increase in assistance funding under s.33-15(1)(b) of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* (5% in 2006 and 7.5% in later years).

To receive the additional funding in 2006 Higher Education Providers, operating on an expired certified agreement, must have in place, by 30 September 2005, a certified agreement(s) and workplace policies and practices that comply with the HEWRRs. Those universities that have existing agreements which expire on or after 1 October 2005 must have in place workplace policies and practices that comply with the HEWRRs.

To receive the additional funding in 2006 universities operating on an expired certified agreement, must have in place, by 30 September 2005, a certified agreement(s) and workplace policies and practices that comply with the HEWRRs.

Those universities which have existing agreements which expire on or after 1 October 2005 must have in place workplace policies and practices that comply with the HEWRRs, except

where compliance with the HEWRRS would be directly inconsistent with the university's obligations under its existing agreement(s) as at today.

To qualify for the increase in Commonwealth Grant Scheme funding available in 2007 and later years, universities must by 31 August of the year prior have in place certified agreement(s) and workplace policies and practices that comply with the HEWRRs.

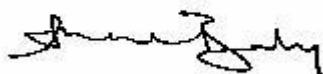
All universities will be required to have compliant workplace agreements, workplace policies and practices by 31 August 2006 in order to receive the 7.5 per cent funding increase in 2007 and will need to comply every year thereafter in order to maintain this funding increase.

Vice Chancellors will be asked to confirm to the Department by the cut-off dates in 2006 and later years that their agreements and informal workplace arrangements and practices comply with both elements of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003*. Further details relating to the evidentiary requirements are attached.

Universities must meet the requirements to the satisfaction of the Minister for Education, Science and Training. DEST will monitor compliance with the HEWRRs through assessments of the agreements and informal workplace arrangements and practices of higher education providers.

Officers from both DEST and the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations have prepared additional information to assist universities to meet the requirements. This information will be provided to you shortly and will also be available on the DEST website. If you would like to discuss any issues relating to the HEWRRs, please contact us by email (Workplace_productivity@dest.gov.au) and your inquiry will be responded to. Alternatively, please feel free to call me on 02 6240 9176.

Yours sincerely



Anne Baly
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Higher Education Group

29 April 2005