

## EDUCATION, SCIENCE AND TRAINING

### SENATE LEGISLATION COMMITTEE - QUESTIONS ON NOTICE SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING

**Outcome:** 2

**Output Group:** 2.4 - Funding for Higher Education

#### DEST Question No. E641\_07

Senator Stephens provided in writing.

#### Question:

Learning and Teaching Performance Funds - Stage 2: Until 2007, universities are required to provide Higher Education Provider Statements which were intended to balance the numeric assessment driven by performance indicator data with a qualitative judgement of that data and related information. This will not be the case for 2007 funding.

- a) Why has this change been made?
- b) Please explain what feedback has DEST received on the 2006 requirement and the new change?
- c) Please explain what constitutes "contextual factors" in the guidelines?
- d) What processes will be in place to ensure that universities with a more diverse student population will not be disadvantaged by this change, given this was also an issue under the 2006 funding model?

#### Answer:

##### *Learning and Teaching Performance Fund*

- a) This change has been made in response to a recommendation from the fund's advisory group to the Minister. The advisory group considered that the providers' statements did not add significantly to the process and that it would be more useful for the expert panel to take into account identified contextual factors that may have significantly influenced the results.
- b) The department has not received any formal feedback from universities regarding the change in requirements. Informal feedback indicates that most support the change, as preparing the provider statements required additional resources.
- c) Contextual factors include factors such as the number of research training scheme places that may influence a university's results and may not have been accounted for in the fund's adjustment process. The contextual factors were identified by reviewing providers' statements for 2006 and their submissions to the discussion paper following the first round of the fund.

Each university will receive feedback from the expert panel on which factors were considered.

- d) The data for all universities are adjusted for a range of factors known to influence outcomes. The adjustment process is intended to provide a 'level playing field' in comparing universities' learning and teaching performance. The factors in the adjustment process are identified in the Learning and Teaching Performance Fund Process 2007 document, which is on the department's website:  
[http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/higher\\_education/policy\\_issues\\_reviews/key\\_issues/learning\\_teaching/ltpf/2007ltpf.htm#Learning\\_and\\_Teaching\\_Performance\\_Fund\\_2007\\_Process](http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/higher_education/policy_issues_reviews/key_issues/learning_teaching/ltpf/2007ltpf.htm#Learning_and_Teaching_Performance_Fund_2007_Process)