

QUESTION TAKEN ON NOTICE

SUPPLEMENTARY BUDGET ESTIMATES HEARING: 30 October 2006

IMMIGRATION AND MULTICULTURAL AFFAIRS PORTFOLIO

(123) Output 1.1 Migration and Temporary Entry

Senator Carr (L&CA written) asked:

1. What evidence of labour market testing do universities have to provide to the Department before they win approval to bring in academics at Levels A and B?
2. Are you aware of research by Anne Junor of the University of NSW that indicates that some 80 000 individuals are employed casually – as casuals – at Australian universities?
3. Are you aware that, of those 80 000 persons, around 10 000 are qualified to enter academic employment (they hold a higher degree) and also are seeking such employment?
4. They are qualified to work at Level A or Level B. Is it reasonable to assume that, given these facts, it is extremely likely that a university would be able to locate within Australia a suitably qualified person to fill a Level A or B position?
5. Does it depend on the academic discipline?
6. In what disciplines are there shortages of academic staff in Australia? What data do you have on this issue? Can you provide copies of any reports on this?
7. Are universities restricted to disciplines where there are shortages when they import 457 visa holders?
8. If not, why not?

Answer:

1. For the Subclass 418 (Educational) visa, universities are generally required to provide documentary evidence they have advertised a position within Australia in the 6 months immediately prior to lodgement of a sponsorship application. Labour market testing is not required where the position is for less than 12 months, the position is for senior academic/research staff, or the position forms part of a labour agreement.

There is no requirement for labour market testing for the Subclass 457 visa programme. Instead, salary and skill thresholds are used.

2 & 3. This is a matter for the Department of Employment and Workplace Relations, and the Department of Education, Science and Training.

4. This would not necessarily be the case. As with skilled positions in any industry, additional expertise or experience or a particular specialisation that may not be reflected through an academic qualification, may be needed.
5. This is a matter for the relevant university.
6. The department does not maintain data on this.
7. It is up to the universities to decide the skills and experience needed for their research and teaching staff.
8. Universities generally recruit academic staff to fulfil specific teaching and research objectives. These are likely to vary between universities. Imposing any general restrictions on the recruitment of academic staff through the Subclass 457 visa programme would be an onerous burden that could severely disadvantage higher education providers by reducing their capacity to compete within Australia and overseas to deliver the very best research and teaching outcomes.