

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

**QUESTION ON NOTICE
Additional Estimates 2016 - 2017**

Outcome: Skills and Training

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ17-000347

Senator Cameron, Doug provided in writing

VET student loans schemes - administration and integrity

Question

In relation to the administration and integrity of the VET student loans schemes: How many examples has the Department found of enrolments in VET courses that were not bona fide? Does the Department know how many TFNs were provided to VET providers by the ATO without the 'student's' knowledge? How many of these students were unaware a debt had been raised against their name? Will you contact all the students whose TFNs were provided to VET providers by the Government (ATO) to see if the debt is genuine?

Answer

In 2016, the department audited 28 VET providers to determine the veracity or bona fides of their reported enrolments and to investigate potential breaches of the *Higher Education Support Act 2003* and the Higher Education Support (VET) Guideline 2015. In 2017, the department has commissioned two additional audits into providers not audited previously. These processes are ongoing.

The department has not been provided with data as to the number of Tax File Numbers (TFNs) requested by VET providers from the Australian Taxation Office (ATO). The provision of TFNs is a matter for the ATO.

The provision of TFNs to providers by the ATO was previously permitted through the 'authorised contact' arrangements. This practice was stopped in September 2016. Providers of VET FEE-HELP and VET Student Loans must seek TFNs from students only.