

Senate Committee: Education and Employment

QUESTION ON NOTICE

Supplementary Budget Estimates 2016 - 2017

Outcome: Skills and Training

Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ16-001119

Senator Cameron, Doug provided in writing

transferrable skills

Question

Has any assessment been undertaken of the value of transferrable skills learnt by students in each course? And whether courses have contributed to students finding work or starting a business – whether or not it is directly related to the field of study?

What consultation was undertaken with providers and students before this course list was released?

What consultation has the Government help with the arts sector in relation to the proposed changes?

Answer

The methodology for determining the VET Student Loans eligible course list included courses listed on at least two state and territory skills lists and including science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) related courses. STEM courses are defined as any course in the following Fields of Education as defined under the Australian Standard Classification of Education: information technology, natural and physical sciences, engineering and related technologies, and agriculture, environment and related studies. State and territory skills lists were used as they draw on state based analysis of skill needs, and two lists were used to ensure a national picture of skills needs rather than needs localised to a single state or territory. STEM courses were included as they align with the Government's National Innovation and Science Agenda.

The Australian Government has undertaken extensive consultation as part of the VET FEE-HELP redesign, of which its replacement with VET Student Loans was the outcome. This included face-to-face consultations with providers and peak bodies, hosted by the then Minister for Vocational Education and Skills, Senator the Hon Scott Ryan, the release of the Discussion Paper to facilitate a public submissions process, and discussions with state and territory government counterparts. The option for tightened course eligibility in a new scheme was a feature in all consultations.

Targeted consultations were not specifically held with the arts sector; however the public submissions process was open to all stakeholders. The discussion paper was released on 29 April 2016 and submissions closed on 30 June 2016. This provided stakeholders eight weeks to provide a submission in response to the issues canvassed in the discussion paper, or more broadly about the future of the VET FEE-HELP scheme.

On 10 October 2016 the Government released the proposed list of eligible courses under VET Student Loans and invite public submissions. Submissions closed on 23 October 2016. Following consideration of feedback, the following changes were made:

- A separate loan cap for the aviation training package will apply. The loan cap will be \$75,000 for all courses under this package.
- The Diploma and Advanced Diploma of Nursing will be in the \$15,000 band.

The Department of Education and Training will undertake a comprehensive review of the approved course list and the loan caps starting February 2017. This review will include consultation with a range of stakeholders including state and territory governments, employers, providers and students. The approved course list will be then reviewed twice yearly, each year from 2018.

The Government will consider requests by Listed and Not-for-Profit providers to include additional courses in the Courses and Caps Determination that are not currently on the published eligible course list. In considering these requests, the Government will require evidence from the provider of employment outcomes for that course, employer support for that course, and their track record of student progression and completion through that course.