

**SENATE STANDING COMMITTEE ON
EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND WORKPLACE RELATIONS**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE
ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES 2008-09**

Outcome 6

DEEWR Question No. EW1055_09

Senator Fierravanti – Wells provided in writing.

Question

Education Agents

How many education agents are engaged in recruiting international students into courses which are also promoted as pathways to permanent migration to Australia? What is the Department doing to regulate the overseas Education Agents?

Answer

Many education agents are based overseas and are subject to the regulations in force in the country in which they operate. They are frequently agents for education providers in other countries as well as Australia.

In Australia, the use by Australian education and training providers of Education Agents to recruit international students is governed by the requirements of Standard 4 of the *National Code of Practice for Registration Authorities and Providers of Education and Training to Overseas Students 2007* (The National Code). The National Code is a legally enforceable legislative instrument.

Standard 4 requires Australian education and training providers to take all reasonable measures to use education agents that have an appropriate knowledge and understanding of the Australian international education industry and not to use agents who are dishonest or lack integrity. Standard 4 explicitly requires providers not to accept students from, nor to enter into an agreement with, an education agent known or reasonably suspected to engage in dishonest practices.

Since 2006 an online Education Agents Training Course (EATC), allows Education Agents to gain a formal qualifications accepted by students, organisations and providers. Since that time, more than 5,200 Education Agents have registered with 663 qualifications issued to the end of 2008.

EATC aims to:

- Provide Education Agents with Information about the Australian education system and Australia as a study destination, education quality assurance issues and the Australian Visa Regulation system;
- Keep agents abreast of changes and developments in international education services; and
- Encourage and support excellence in business service delivery, study and professional development.

Qualified Education Agents are listed on a database globally accessible at <http://www.pieronline.org/geac/>

Where education agents are also migration agents they come within the purview of the Migration Agents Registration Authority (MARA), which is a division of The Migration Institute of Australia Limited, the peak professional association of migration agents in Australia. MARA operates nationally to regulate the migration advice profession under section 316 of the *Migration Act 1958*.