

**Senate Standing Committee on Education Employment and Workplace  
Relations**

**QUESTIONS ON NOTICE  
Supplementary Budget Estimates 2011-2012**

**Outcome 2 – Schools and Youth**

**DEEWR Question No. EW0844\_12**

**Senator Scullion asked on 20 October 2011 , Hansard page 90**

**Question**

***ABSTUDY – non-attendance***

Senator SCULLION: I can understand that. Let's say, we get into day 10 and five of those days have not been attended already. Is this only amortised or rationalised at the end of every term or is there another trigger earlier to say: 'Look, they're just not turning up. They turned up for one day and we haven't seen them since'? Is there a trigger process before the end of the term? For example, they might attend for one day and think, 'School's for the crows; I'm just not coming back,' so they get a full term of payment and it is never ever able to be amortised. Is there an interim trigger, I suppose, if the five days are exceeded? Mr Pattie: We would have to check the practical application from Centrelink's point of view. But, essentially, the school could contact Centrelink at any stage if that child was not at school and that would then trigger that situation. Senator SCULLION: It is quite a complex area. I understand. You might not have the completeness of it. On notice, could you provide me with a brief and a flow system of what happens?

**Answer**

There is a legislative requirement that ABSTUDY recipients must advise the Department of Human Services (Centrelink) of any changes to their circumstances that might affect their eligibility for their ABSTUDY payment. These 'notifiable events', which include leaving full-time study, are listed in the *Student Assistance Regulations 2003*.

Enrolment and attendance reviews are undertaken on a regular basis by the Centrelink, who have responsibility for the delivery of the ABSTUDY scheme. These checks ensure students remain qualified for their payment by satisfying their applicable Activity Test or study load requirement.

Enrolment and attendance checks with secondary schools are undertaken as follows: attendance checks in terms two, three and four (except Tasmania which has only three terms) and, enrolment checking once per term.

Attendance and enrolment checks occur at the start of the next term (i.e. term two checks are conducted at the start of term three). Students who are currently entitled to receive a payment (even if currently suspended) and have indicated that they are undertaking full-time studies, are selected for enrolment matching.

#### ABSTUDY School Term Allowance

ABSTUDY School Term Allowance is a payment of \$540.80 per annum for eligible Indigenous secondary students under 16 years of age who are living at home. It is paid in four instalments (three instalments in Tasmania).

The payment for term one of the school year is automatically paid for a qualified student who is enrolled and attends in term one of the school year. Subsequent term payments (Terms two, three or four) are only payable if a student has attended 85 per cent of the previous school term in that year.

Attendance data for students is requested from schools at the end of each term, except the last term of the school year.

Schools are sent, via facsimile, a unique key (password) to log into the Centrelink website where a list of students at their school is displayed. The school advises whether the student has attended 85 per cent of the previous term and returns the report online.

The majority of activities are automatically actioned by the Centrelink IT system, with the remainder being assessed and actioned manually by Centrelink staff.

## DHS - Standard Enrolment Checking Procedure

