

**Senate Community Affairs Committee**  
**ANSWERS TO ESTIMATES QUESTIONS ON NOTICE**  
**Social Services Portfolio**  
**2014-15 Budget Estimates Hearings**

**Outcome Number: 1**

**Question No: 299**

**Topic: Employment**

**Hansard Page: Written**

**Senator Lines** asked:

Under the earn or learn policy a young person under 30 is therefore required to immediately find employment or enter into study. Does this mean:

- (a) they must undertake study regardless as whether it is at a lower level than their current qualifications?
- (b) the length of time for the course they enrol in and the hours required to study may prohibit their ability to look for work.
- (c) Is the policy intention that while they are studying they no longer look for work?
- (d) If they are supposed to look for work while studying, is the expectation that on finding a job they quit the course, thereby wasting the money they paid and disrupting the class in which they have been enrolled?
- (e) If the expectation is they focus on completing the course, at the end of the course will the six month exclusion from payment start again?
- (f) If it does, is this policy locking young people into a cycle of study for study's sake and interfering with their capacity to find work?

**Answer:**

a) To be eligible for Youth Allowance (student) and Austudy, students must be enrolled in full-time study or a full-time Australian apprenticeship at an approved institution in an approved course. Under the *Social Security Act 1991*, an approved course of education or study for Youth Allowance (student) and Austudy is a course set out in the Student Assistance (Education Institutions and Courses) Determination 2009 (No.2) which can be found at: <http://www.comlaw.gov.au/Details/F2013C01032>.

(b) For Youth Allowance (student), students can undertake courses at, above or below the level of their existing qualifications, subject to the satisfactory progress provisions. For Austudy, students must be generally undertaking a course at a different level to their existing qualifications, subject to allowable time rules.

(c) and (f) The policy intention is that the course of study will assist their job search by increasing their employability once the course is completed.

(d) The Senate has resolved that officers of a department of the Commonwealth shall not be asked to give opinions on matters of policy.

(e) At the end of the course the six month exclusion from payment will apply again, assuming the young person is still aged under 30 and still has not found work.