

## Senate Committee: Education and Employment

### QUESTION ON NOTICE Additional Estimates 2015 - 2016

#### Outcome: Higher Education Research and International

#### Department of Education and Training Question No. SQ16-000040

Senator O'Neill, Deborah asked on 10 February 2016, Proof Hansard page 47

#### *Funding of student practicum placements*

##### Question

Senator O'NEILL: One of the areas I have some concerns about is the 60 days for the graduate program or the 80 days for the undergraduate program. Certainly for the time I was working in the sector and by reports since, the organisation of teacher practicums has become looser and looser to the point where there have been some carveout relationships between different universities and particular regions. That seems to have dissolved, and there seems to be a bunfight to get placement. That is a big issue, particularly where more and more mature age students studying online are getting their own placements. I have huge concerns about the quality of that. I would like to take you through a few questions about that. How are student practicum placements funded currently?

Ms Evans: They are funded by a grant from government through universities.

Senator O'NEILL: What is the line of sight for where that money goes and the acquittal of the money invested?

Mr Cook: I do not believe it is tagged, but I am happy to take that on notice. Our higher ed. colleagues might be able to help us later tonight, but I do not think it is specifically tagged to practicums, to the best of my knowledge.

##### Answer

- Contributions for practicums for student teachers are provided through the Commonwealth Grant Scheme and are included in the contribution amounts for the education cluster.
- For a course that is accredited by a State or Territory teacher regulatory authority as an initial teacher education course, the university must ensure that each student enrolled in that course has access to teacher practicums in accordance with the approved national accreditation standard.
- Clause 24 of the Commonwealth Grant Scheme Funding Agreement identifies the specific contribution amount for a place in the education cluster in recognition of the cost of a teaching practicum. This is \$858 per EFTSL respectively for student teachers. Further, it states with regard to spending funds for practicums, that *'The University must use these amounts only for those purposes.'*
- Universities are required to acquit that their programme funds have been expensed in accordance with the programme guidelines. This is done at the aggregate level i.e. it does not split the extra funding for practicums from the normal cluster contribution amount.